

Lois Latham
by Philip Buckland



A Frank Hurley mystery

Also in the Frank Hurley series:

The Cranston Occurrence

The Hiders

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CHAPTER I

A man walked into my office. He was tall, thin, almost emaciated, pale, had dark brown hair, hazel eyes, a thin face, a big thin nose, and he was wearing a white windbreaker and a light blue shirt, no tie, open collar, and dark charcoal gray pants and black leather shoes.

"Are you Frank Hurley?" he asked me.

"I am," I said. I had to tell him it was me. There wasn't a sign on my office that said who I was and what I did for a living. Only the number of the address of my office was on my office.

"My name is Lloyd Wilcox," the man introduced himself.

When he got to my desk, he held his hand out and I stood up and shook hands with him. His grip was firm yet soft.

"Would you like something to drink, Mr. Wilcox?" I offered him.

"No thanks," he said.

"Won't you sit down."

We did.

"I understand that you look into anything secret or illegal, Mr. Hurley," Wilcox said to me.

"That's right," I confirmed. "I do."

"Well, I think that this girl I work with is up to something, and I'd like to know what it is."

I wondered about this. Then I spoke: "What makes you think she's up to something?"

"The way she behaved."

"Oh?"

"Yes. It happened last week when she and I got off work and walked into the parking lot to get into our cars and leave. I was going in the same direction that *she* was going in when *she* was going to *her* car. Then she noticed what I was doing and asked me

if I were following her--and she snapped at me when she asked me that question. I told her I wasn't following her, but then she insisted that I *was* following her and told me to stop following her and to leave her alone. Then she got into her car and left. Then, a couple of days later, when we were at work, she apologized to me for snapping at me about her thinking that I was following her. Then, politely but firmly, she told me not to follow her anymore, and to leave her alone. Then she went back to work."

I wondered about this. Then I spoke: "Well, it *does* sound like she is up to something. First she snaps at you when she thinks you're following her, and then she apologizes to you later for snapping at you, but she still thinks that you're following her and she doesn't want you to follow her, *and*, she wants you to leave her alone."

"Yes, it does,"

"And if she insisted that you followed her, then that would mean that she's

convinced that you followed her, or she said that so she can have something to use against you if she has to."

"I see. I don't know if this means anything or not, but before she thought I was following her and snapped at me, she never snapped at me. She and I got along just fine."

"Which meant that you must have seen her at a wrong time. And that wrong time that you saw her at was in the parking lot when she noticed you going in the same direction *she* was going in when the both of you were going to your cars and then she thought you were following her and told you not to follow her and to leave her alone and then she left. She was going to go to somewhere, but she didn't want you to know where it was she was going to go to. That has to be it."

"Yeah. It sounds suspicious, though."

"I know. Did you tell the police what you suspect?"

"No, I didn't. It wouldn't have done any good if I did. She would have denied we talked about her thinking that I was following her--or worse--she could say that I *was* following her."

"She could, but I doubt it. Depending upon how badly she wants to keep quiet whatever it is that she's up to, she won't want an investigation of her saying that you were following her. If there were an investigation of her saying that you were following her, it would uncover whatever it is that she's up to."

"In other words, she's bluffing."

"That's right. Did you tell anyone else what you suspect?"

"No, I didn't. She'd deny we talked about her thinking that I was following her. Or, she could say that I *was* following her. But realized that she could say that I *was* following her before you pointed out to me that she was bluffing about her saying that I was following her."

"Of course. Did anyone see you and her talk about her thinking that you were following her when the two of you were out in the parking lot?"

"No,"

"Which means that what the two of you were talking about was private, although her noticing you going in the same direction she was going in when she was going to her car and thinking that you were following her was accidental. What about at work, when she apologized to you for snapping at you for her thinking that you were following her and then telling you to leave her alone. Did anyone see the two of you talking about this?"

"No. They were busy doing other things."

"Well, there wasn't anything wrong about that. As long as she's careful about what to say and do and when to do it, she won't arouse suspicion."

"Yeah," Wilcox sounded disappointed.

"But just because she's up to something doesn't mean it's illegal. Maybe it's legal, but she's doing it in a secret fashion. Or maybe it *is* illegal."

"Yes. I know. I know what you do when you look into something and find out someone is doing something legal in a secret fashion: you walk away from it and forget it, and you don't tell anyone what he's doing. You don't even tell the client what he's doing. But if you look into something and find out someone is doing something illegal, then you call the police with or without the client's knowledge or permission."

"That's right. That's what I do."

"I understand."

"Good. As long as you know and understand."

"I do,"

"All right. O.K. I'll take the case."

Wilcox smiled. "Thank you, Mr. Hurley."

I smiled, too. "You're welcome, Mr. Wilcox. Now. I imagine that if you know

what I do, you must also know what my fee is."

"Yes, I do: twenty five dollars an hour. I can pay it and I will."

"Good. Now. This is what I'd like for you to do while I look into this possibility of the girl's being up to something: leave her alone and don't follow her whenever the both of you are on your own time. Do work with her whenever the both of you are on company time. I imagine you still work with her?"

"Yes, I do,"

"But I imagine she's being nice to you while she's working with you?"

"Yes, she is."

"Probably wants to continue being nice to you and to others so she won't arouse suspicion. Except for that time when she snapped at you in the parking lot. Although that was accidental.

"Yeah,"

"And keep your eyes and ears open. If you see or hear something, let me know."

"All right. What if she asks me to do something with her on our own time?"

"Do it. So you don't arouse suspicion. And maybe whatever it is you do with her has to do with whatever it is that she's up to. If you do something with her on your time and hers, let me know. And tell me whatever it is the two of you do."

"All right,"

"But whatever you do, whenever you're with her on her time and yours, doing whatever it is she wants to do with you on your time and hers, and whenever you're on your own time and hers and leaving her alone and not following her, and whenever the two of you are at work, don't ask her any questions about what she might be up to. We don't want her to know that we know that she might be up to something."

"All right,"

"And don't tell her or anyone else that you hired a private investigator to find out if she's up to something. She'll object to your

having a private investigator looking into her affairs and take action against it."

"All right."

"And don't mention my name to her or anyone else."

"All right,"

"All right. Now. I'm going to need to know some things. The girl who's supposed to be up to something. What's her name?"

"Lois Latham,"

I wrote her name down on the pad on my desk. "What does she look like?"

Wilcox told me and I wrote her physical description down on the pad. "Where does she live?"

Wilcox told me and I wrote her home address down on the pad. "What's her home phone number?"

"I don't know,"

I didn't write *that* down on the pad. "What kind of car does she drive?"

"An amber Renault."

I wrote *that* down on the pad. "What's the license plate num--"

"Don't you want to know what kind of car *I* drive?" Wilcox asked me.

"No, it's not necessary," I told him. "Now. What's the license plate number of Lois Latham's car if you saw it?"

"I didn't see it, I'm afraid,"

I didn't write down on the pad that Wilcox hadn't seen the license plate number of Lois's car. "Where do *you* live? Nothing personal, but I will need to know where you live so I can send you my invoice if I complete this assignment successfully."

"I understand," Wilcox said. Then he told me where he lived and I wrote down his home address down on the pad. "What's *your* home phone number? Nothing personal, but I may have to call you and talk to you about the case."

"I understand," Then Wilcox told me his home phone number and I wrote it down on

the pad. "Where do you and Lois Latham work at?"

"TechPC," Wilcox said. "It makes and repairs--"

--and sells computer parts and computer equipment and computerized items," I said and wrote TechPC down on the pad. "I know what TechPC does. Where *is* TechPC?"

Wilcox told me and I wrote down on the pad where TechPC was. Then I spoke to Wilcox again: "Well. I think I have everything I need. Now. Until I find out that Lois Latham is or isn't up to something, everything that we talk about that has to do with Lois Latham's being up to something stays right here in this office. When we leave here, we don't tell anyone what we talk out; we don't even tell Lois Latham herself what we talk about. We can't go around and say that Lois Latham is up to something. If we do, and Lois Latham finds out that we went around and said she's up to something, she'll

protest about it, and then we'll get into trouble."

"I understand,"

"All right. Well. I think that's it. Unless there's something else that *you'd* like to talk about."

"No. I can't think of anything else."

"All right," Then I stood up, and so did Wilcox, and then the both of u shook hands.

"I'll be in touch," I then told Wilcox.

"Thank you. And thank you for letting me talk to you about Lois Latham."

"You're welcome, Mr. Wilcox."

"Bye."

"Bye."

Then Wilcox left, and I sat back down behind my desk and took a manila folder out of one of the drawers of my desk so I could write the title of the case on the folder. It was time now for me to open up a file on the case.

CHAPTER II

I wrote on the folder LATHAM SCHEME CASE. Since Wilcox thought that Lois was up to something. Then I turned on the computer so I could run a check on Wilcox, and run a check on Lois.

Wilcox had been born and raised and had lived in Portland, Oregon most of his life. Had worked for Computertronics, a computer manufacturing company in Portland for a few years, as a computer designer, and then he had moved up here to Bellingham, Washington and had gone to work at TechPC, working in their corporate office. He had been working there ever since, and he was still working there, and he still lived here in Bellingham. Made good money. Because of this, he'd be able to pay my fee. I liked that. Good credit rating. Good man. Model citizen.

Lois had been born and raised and had lived in Boise, Idaho most of her life. She had worked for Security Items, Inc., a company that had made, had repaired, and sold all kinds of security items, as a personnel assistant. Then one day she and some other people who had worked at Security Items had quit Security Items, Inc., and hadn't been seen or heard from since. Then, a few days after they had quit Security Items, a lot of money had been stolen from Security Items. And then the authorities had looked into the theft, and in the course of their investigation, they had discovered that Amos Dawson, the president of Security Items, had been stealing from his own company. Then the authorities had arrested Dawson. Then, later, Lois had appeared here in Bellingham and had gone to work at TechPC in the corporate office. She still worked at TechPC in the corporate office, and she still lived here in Bellingham. Made good money. Good credit rating. Keeps to

herself most of the time. Does not cause any trouble. Nice girl.

She also owned some property here in Bellingham: a house on Bakerview Road.

No information on the other people who had quit Security Items before the theft at Security Items, and before the authorities had discovered that Dawson had stolen from his own company.

That was the end of the information I had gotten on Wilcox and Lois. Then I printed it out and put it into the folder on the file of the Latham scheme case, and then I tore off of the pad on my desk the other information on Lois and Wilcox I had written down on the pad on my desk, and then I paper clipped *that* information to the inside of the folder. Then I closed up the folder and turned the computer and the printer off. I wasn't going to need to use them anymore right now. Then I sat back in my chair and thought about my new case.

I found it interesting. Especially the part where Lois and the other people had quit Security Items a few days before the theft at Security Items had occurred, and before the authorities had discovered that Dawson had stolen from his own company and had arrested him for the crime. This brought up an interesting question: why did Lois and these other people quit Security Items a few days before the theft at Security Items had occurred, and before the authorities had looked into the theft and discovered that Dawson had stolen from his own company and had arrested him? Maybe they had something to do with both thefts or one of them. Or maybe they had nothing to do with both thefts. Maybe they had quit Security Items a few days before the theft at Security Items had occurred, and before the authorities had looked into the theft and had discovered that Dawson had stolen from his own company for some other reason.

And then there was another question: why had Lois appeared here in Bellingham after the theft at Security Items had occurred, and after the authorities had investigated the theft and had discovered that Dawson had been stealing from his own company and had been arrested him for the crime? Maybe her doing this had to do with what had happened at Security Items, or maybe it had to do with something else.

But at the moment, all of this didn't tell me if Lois's accusing Wilcox of following her had to do with what had happened at Security Items, or if her accusing Wilcox of following her had to do with something else. Maybe her accusing Wilcox of following her had to do with what had happened at Security Items. Or maybe her accusing Wilcox of following her had to do with something else. But only an investigation would tell me which of the two it was. Then I looked out the window by accident and noticed that it was getting dark out. Dark

was replacing light. Then I looked at my watch. Four forty-seven.

Since it was getting late, so I decided to start my investigation tomorrow. But what I could do tonight was get some food for stakeouts and surveillance. I would stake out a place or put someone under surveillance in the course of my investigation. And because of this, I would need to have some food with me when I do one or the other or both. I would get hungry during the stakeout or the surveillance. And I was going to need to be prepared for it. And after I get the food, I go home and get some sleep for tomorrow's work. I was going to need to do that, too. But before I get the food and get some sleep, I was going to need to get something to eat. I was getting hungry, and it was dinner time, and there wasn't anything else here at the office I could do right now that had to do with the investigation, and I could eat out for dinner this time. So I took my notebook out of my pocket and wrote down in it Lois's

home address and the address of the property here in Bellingham that she owned. I was going to need to search those places, and I was going to start off the investigation by searching those places. Then then I put my notebook back into my pocket and unlocked the filing cabinet and put the file on the Latham scheme case into the filing cabinet, and then I locked up the cabinet, and then I stepped out of my office and closed and locked the door, and then I walked out into the parking lot and went over to my Dodge and unlocked it, and then I got into my car and started it up and pulled away from the office so I could leave my office.

I was driving down the street now. Looking for a good place to eat at.

I was here at that place now: Extremes. It was here in Fairhaven. It was a wonderful restaurant. I had eaten here before. And I was in the mood to eat here again, too. For

dinner I had a burger and fries and washed it down with a Coke.

It was dark out now. Dark had replaced light.

I felt better after I had eaten. Then I left a nice tip on the table, and then I paid the check and left the restaurant and went over to the store and got some food to eat on the stakeouts and surveillance, and then I went home.

Home was on Liberty Street.

I was here at home now. I put the food away, and then I got undressed and took a shower, and then I got into my pajamas and bathrobe and slippers and watched TV until nine o'clock. Then I turned the TV off and left the living room and went into *my* room, and then I turned the light on, and then I set the alarm clock for a time I wanted to get up at tomorrow, and then I put my Smith and Wesson .38 Special underneath the pillow, and then I turned the light off and got into bed and went to sleep.

The next morning, I was up early. I had gotten up at the time I had wanted to get up at and had breakfast. Now I poured me my last cup of coffee and made a new pot of coffee. This coffee I was going to pour into my thermos and drink on the stakeouts and surveillance. I was going to need to stay awake for the stakeouts and surveillance. Then I sipped my last cup of coffee and watched TV.

After I finished my last cup of coffee, and after the new pot of coffee finished cooking, I poured the coffee out of the pot and into the thermos. Then I went and got dressed, and then I collected the thermos and the food I was going to eat on the stakeouts and surveillance and walked out of my place and locked the door and noticed it was still dark out. The sky was so black that I could hardly see a star in the sky. Although I could see the moon. It was big and round and white and glowing.

Then I went to my car and unlocked it and got into it and started it up and drove away from my place. It was time now for me to go start my investigation the way I had planned.

CHAPTER III

Lois's place was on Indian Street. It was an apartment.

I reached her place and parked my car across the street from her place and watched her place. The light inside her place was on. Which meant that she must be getting ready to go to work. Then I saw her car: the amber Renault. It was parked against the curb in front of her place. Then I noticed the license plate number of her car and took my pen and notebook out of my pocket and wrote down the license plate number of her car, and then I put my pen and notebook back into my pocket and continued watching her place. Then the light inside her place was turned off, and then Lois came out of her apartment and locked it, and then she walked down the stairs. She was tall, plump, had long, thick black hair, brown eyes, a

creamy pallor complexion, a sort of crooked nose, and she was wearing a gray blouse with black flowers and a black skirt and flesh tone stockings and shiny black high heel shoes, and the strap of her shiny beige shoulder strap handbag was resting on her right shoulder, and her right hand was grasping the strap of her purse.

When she reached the bottom of the stairs, she walked over to the Renault and unlocked it and got into it and started it up, and then she pulled away from the curb and into the street and drove down the street. Then I looked around to make sure that no one was going to see me sneak into Lois's apartment. No one did. Then I took my leather gloves out of my pocket and put them on, and then I got out of my car and locked it, and then I crossed the street and went up to Lois's apartment. Then I took my lock pick set out of my pocket and picked the lock of the front door of Lois's apartment, and then, quickly and silently, I

went into the apartment and closed and locked the door. After that I put my lock pick back into my pocket and looked around.

The room I was standing in now was the living room. It was big and square and pale yellow, with a burnt orange rug, and lining all of the walls of the living room were the TV and DVD player and VCR and radio and turntable and blond wood shelves with records and DVD's and videocassettes in them, and blond wood cabinets and a blond wood desk with matching armchair and a computer next to the desk. And in the center of the room were a big white couch with multi colored flowers and a shiny black coffee table.

I went over to the desk to begin my search there. I sat down behind the desk to open the drawers of the desk. But they couldn't be opened. They were locked. So I got out my lock pick set to unlock the drawers. Then I noticed some letters inside

one of the drawers. Some of them were advertisements, and the rest of them were unpaid bills. One of the bills I found interesting: a statement from Transmutual Insurance telling Lois Latham to pay the next premium on a platinum statue of Apollo. I got out my voice recorder and recorded this. Then I put it back into my pocket. Then I noticed the cash box inside the same drawer the bills and advertisements were in. It was small and black and lightweight. And locked. So I took it out of the drawer and put it on the desk and picked the lock on the box, and then I opened up the lid of the box to take a look inside the box. There was cash and coins inside a tray. I counted the cash and coins as quickly as I could. A few hundred dollars in the tray. Some of them were in hundreds, some of them were in twenties, some of them were tens, some of them were fives, and the rest of them were in ones. And there were about ten dollars in quarters and dimes

and nickels and pennies in the tray, too. Then I put the cash and the coins back into the tray, and then I took the tray out of the cash box to take a look at what else was behind the cash box: a bank book. I opened up to take a look inside. Lois had a lot of money in her savings. Undoubtedly from the money she made at work. There were dates here inside the book that indicated she had put money into her saving every two weeks. Which meant that that money had to come from her job. Then I noticed that she had made some more deposits. Bigger than the ones she had made from the ones she had made every two weeks. I wondered about this. But I was going to have to think about this after I search the place and leave it. Right now I had to continue searching the place and then leave the place. I couldn't hang around here any longer than I was supposed to. It'd be dangerous if I would. I'd be discovered or caught or killed. So I continued searching the rest of the cash box.

But found nothing else interesting inside it. Then I put the tray back inside the cash box, and then I locked up the cash box and put it and the letters back into the same drawer I had found all of these items in, and then I locked up the drawer, and then I unlocked another drawer to look inside it. And found a couple of files in it. One of them contained information on the property here in Bellingham that Lois owned. I found this interesting. So I took my camera out of my pocket and photographed each and every page of the information, and then I put my camera back into my pocket, and then I closed the folder of this file on the information and put the file back into the drawer. Then I put the file back into the drawer, and then I took the other file out of the drawer to take a look at that. It was the file from the Transmutual Insurance Company. The file contained the insurance policy on a platinum statue of Apollo. Also inside the file was a receipt. It said that Lois

had purchased the platinum statue of Apollo from a company called The Platinum Man. The Platinum Man was a company that specialized making things out of platinum, and buying and selling platinum items.

The receipt also said where the Platinum Man was, and when Lois had purchased the platinum statue of Apollo. Then I took my camera out of my pocket and photographed each and every page of the policy, and then I photographed the receipt of the purchase of the platinum statue of Apollo. I found the statue of Apollo interesting. Then I put my camera back into my pocket, and then I put the folder back into the drawer, and then I locked up the drawer.

I was walking away from the desk now. I had unlocked and had looked inside each and every drawer of the desk, but I hadn't found anything interesting inside them. Then I had locked up the drawers after I had finished searching them. Now I was

searching the rest of the living room. But I didn't find anything interesting inside it.

I was in the kitchen and searching it now. It was just as big as the living room. And it was white with a white linoleum floor, and lining all of the walls of the kitchen were white cupboards and the white refrigerator and the white stove and the white microwave oven and the white dishwasher and the white washer and the white dryer, and in the center of the room were a light brown table with matching chairs surrounding the table.

I found nothing of interest here inside the kitchen. So I left the kitchen.

I was in the hall now. I came to a door that had a dead bolt lock on it. I turned the knob of the door to go into the room, but the door was locked. Then I took out of my pocket an electronic device that was made to open dead bolt locks. I put the device on the dead bolt lock and turned it on, and then I could hear the mechanism inside the device

turn the bolt to unlock the door. Then I heard the bolt go all the way back. Then I turned the device off and put it back into my pocket, and then I went into the room.

The room was small but spacious, and it was white with a white carpet and a closet. There was nothing inside the room. Then I went over to the closet to look inside it. Nothing inside the closet. Then I closed the closet door and left the room, locking the door the same way I had unlocked it. I found this room interesting. Then I put the electronic device back into my pocket, and then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded the fact that there was a dead bolt lock on the door of this room, and that the room was empty and locked. Then I turned my voice recorder off and put it back into my pocket and walked through the hall and came to another door and opened it to look inside. The room I was looking into now was the bathroom. It was small but spacious, and it was white, too,

with a white shower curtain and a white medicine cabinet and a white basin and a white toilet and a white tile floor with a white bath mat on the floor, and a mat surrounding the toilet. I searched the bathroom. But found nothing inside it that interested me. Then I left the bathroom and noticed another door in the hall. I went over to it and opened the door to look inside. This room had to be Lois's room. It was small but spacious and white, and against one of the walls a blonde dresser, and against another wall was a bed with an amber spread on it, and on the pillow was an amber case, and on either side of the bed were blonde wood end tables, and on one of the tables was an emerald lamp, and on the other table was a radio. And opposite the bed was a closet with sliding white wooden doors.

I searched this room. But I didn't anything interesting in it. Then I left the room and closed the door. Then I went back

into the living room and put a bug underneath the knee hole of Lois's desk, and put a tap underneath the phone on Lois's desk. Then I snuck out of Lois's apartment and closed and locked the door. Then I noticed it was getting light out. The light was replacing the dark. Then I walked down the stairs and crossed the street and walked over to my car and unlocked it and got into it and drove away. Next stop: the property here in Bellingham that Lois owned.

It was on Bakerview Road. A white one story house with a blue gray roof and a matching garage.

I parked my car across the street from it, and then I got out of my car and locked it, and then I crossed the street and looked around to make sure that no one was going to see me go into the backyard of the place that Lois owned. No one did. Then I reached the place and went into the backyard and got out my lock pick and picked the lock of the back door of the place and went in.

I was driving away from the place that Lois owned now. I had finished searching the place. Now I glanced at my watch. Eight minutes to nine. I could go back to my office and start writing my report on the Latham scheme case right now. I didn't have to put Lois Latham under surveillance right away. Since she must be at work right now. Besides, it would give me a chance to think about what I had discovered at Lois's place, *and*, the property she owned. As for the property she owned, I had found nothing interesting there. All of the rooms inside the house were empty, and the entire garage was empty. Which meant that she wasn't using the property right now. But that didn't mean that she wouldn't use the property later. There would be that possibility that she would use the property later.

I was here at my office now. I had developed the film in my camera after I had gotten here. Now I was sitting behind my desk and writing my report on what I had

discovered at Lois's place, *and*, at the property she owned. Then I printed out the report and put it inside the folder of the file on the Latham scheme case, and then I turned the computer and the printer off and looked at the photographs of the papers of the purchase of the property here in Bellingham that Lois owned, and looked at the photographs of the papers of the insurance policy Lois had on the platinum statue of Apollo, and the receipt of the purchase of the statue of Apollo that Lois had made, and read all of these papers. Then I put all of the photographs of all of the papers into the folder of the file on the Latham scheme case, and then I closed up the folder of the file on the Latham scheme case and sat back in my chair and thought about what I had discovered so far.

The letter from Transmutual Insurance telling Lois it was time for her to pay the insurance premium on the platinum statue of Apollo she owned. Maybe her insuring

this statue had to do with her accusing Wilcox of following her. Or maybe her insuring the statue had to do with something else. And where was this statue of Apollo right now? I hadn't seen it.

And then there was the receipt of Lois's paying for the statue of Apollo. It did say where and when she had purchased the statue. The place she had purchased the statue from was in Boise. And she had bought the statue right around the time the first robbery at Security Items had occurred, and right around the time the authorities had investigated the theft and had discovered that Dawson had been stealing from Security Items, too. But there was no record of her insuring the statue in Boise. There was only a record of her insuring the statue here in Bellingham. Maybe she didn't have time to insure the statue because she and the rest of those people had quit Security Items and hadn't been seen or heard from since. But later on, when Lois

had appeared here in Bellingham, and had gone to work to TechPC, she had had the time to insure the statue and had insured the statue.

And then there were the amounts of money she had deposited into her savings, the amounts of money that must not have come from her paychecks, the amounts of money that she had deposited into her savings at different times and not every two weeks. Where did this money come from? And did she get this money legally or illegally? My guess was that this money came from the first robbery at Security Items, the one that had occurred before the authorities had discovered that Dawson had been stealing from his own company. But if this money had come from the first robbery at Security Items, then that would mean that Lois had been one of the thieves who had stolen the money from Security Items. That would explain why no one had seen or heard from her after she had quit Security Items as

well as they hadn't seen or heard from the other people who had quit Security Items.

And if she had been of the thieves who had stolen that money from Security Items, then why did she and the other people steal that money from Security Items?

And then there was something else: they had stolen all of that money from Security Items before the authorities had discovered that Dawson had stolen from Security Items. Maybe they hadn't known that Dawson had been stealing from his own company. Or maybe they *had* known. But if they *had* known that Dawson had been stealing from his own company, then they must have had some reason for stealing that money before the authorities had found out that Dawson had been stealing from Security Items. Maybe Dawson had been working with those people who had committed the first robbery. But if he had, then why had he been caught stealing from his own company, and those other people hadn't been caught committing

the first robbery? Unless perhaps it had been just that: Dawson had gotten caught stealing from Security Items and not those other people. Or maybe it had been something else.

And did these two robberies have to do with Lois's accusing Wilcox of following her? Or did these two robberies have to do with something else?

And then there was the room inside Lois's apartment that had the dead bolt lock on the door, and the room was empty and locked. Why?

And did the locked empty room have to do with Lois's accusing Wilcox of following her? Or did the locked empty room have to do with something else?

And then there was the property here in Bellingham that Lois owned. She did own it, but the property wasn't used. Why?

And did her owning this property, but not using it, have to do with her accusing Wilcox of following her? Or did her owning

but not using the property have to do with something else?

I got on the computer so I could find out what I can about the robberies at Security Items. Maybe *they* could tell me what I needed to know. But they only told me what I had already found out. They also told me that after the authorities had investigated the first robbery and had discovered that Dawson had been stealing from Security Items, Security Items had been closed down, and now Security Items was out of business, because of the two robberies, and that Dawson had gone to prison for what he had done. But the authorities hadn't found the people who had committed the first robbery, although they had stopped looking for them when the statute of limitations on the first robbery had run out. Which meant that the money that those people had gotten from the first robbery they had committed was theirs now. Legally. And they could do what they wanted with it now. In that case, if Lois

had been one of the people who had committed that first robbery, then she must be doing what *she* wants to do with *her* share of the money, and it was legal. But at the moment, I didn't know if she had been one of the people who had committed the first robbery or not. And I was going to have to find out which. And if I find out that she had been one of the people who had committed the first robbery, I was going to want to know why she and the other people had committed the first robbery. But if she had gotten this money she had been putting into her saving as well as she had been putting her paychecks into her savings from something else and not from the first robbery at Security Items, then I was going to have to find out where she had gotten this money, and if she had gotten it legally or illegally, and if her getting this money from the something else and not from the first robbery at Security Items had to do with her

accusing Wilcox of following her, or if her getting this money from the something else.

After I found out about the robberies at Security Items, I turned the computer off. I wasn't going to be able to find out about the other things by computer. Because of this, I was going to have to find out about them some other way. Then I looked at my watch. Eleven twenty-six.

I'd have time to put Lois under surveillance. That is, if I get to TechPC in plenty of time to see her leave TechPC and go somewhere and have lunch and do something else after lunch. And then I could follow her from TechPC and observe what she does. That is, if she leaves TechPC and goes somewhere and has lunch and does something after lunch. So I put the file on the Latham scheme case into the filing cabinet and locked up the cabinet, and then I left my office and closed and locked the door, and then I got into my car and drove over to TechPC.

TechPC was on Lincoln Street.

I arrived here at TechPC and parked my car across the street from TechPC and looked at my watch. Eleven thirty-nine.

I had arrived here at TechPC in plenty of time to see Lois leave TechPC and go somewhere and have lunch and do something after lunch and put her under surveillance. That is, if she were going to leave TechPC and go somewhere and have lunch and do something after lunch. I took my binoculars out of my glove compartment and looked through them to see when she was going to come out of TechPC and go somewhere and have lunch and do something after lunch. I didn't see her come out of TechPC. Which meant that she must still be inside TechPC, working, or she had left TechPC and had gone somewhere and was having lunch, and then she was going to go somewhere and do something after lunch. So I put the binoculars back into the

glove compartment and continued watching TechPC.

While I waited and continued watching TechPC, I poured me a cup of coffee from the thermos and pulled a sandwich out of the bag of groceries and ate the sandwich and sipped the coffee. I was getting hungry. So I might as well eat while I had the chance to eat. Because I didn't know when I was going to get the chance to eat again.

I felt better after I had eaten. Then, I saw people coming out of TechPC. Quickly I took the binoculars out of the glove compartment to look through them and see if Lois were one of the people who were walking out of TechPC. She was. And she was wearing the same clothes she was wearing this morning when I had seen her leave her place and before I had searched her place; I also saw Wilcox walking out of TechPC with the rest of the people. He was wearing a light blue long sleeve shirt, no tie, open collar, and green pants and black

leather shoes. He wasn't with Lois, though. Instead he was with someone else and talking to that person as they and Lois and the rest of the people walked out into the parking lot and got into their cars. I looked at my watch. It was noon now. Then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded when I saw Lois do and when she did it.

When I saw her get into *her* car, I started up *my* car, and then I saw Lois drive out of the parking lot and turn onto the street and drive down the street. Then I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw her do and when she did it and followed her. Making sure that she didn't see me following her. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket.

I followed her to Lee's Drive In, a nice restaurant here on James Street. Then I saw her turn into the parking lot of the restaurant and park her car there, and then I saw her get out of her car and go into the

restaurant. No doubt she was going to have lunch there. I parked across the street and watched the restaurant and looked at my watch. Twelve 0-four. I recorded the time I had seen Lois go into Lee's. Then I watched the restaurant.

About an hour later, I saw Lois walk out of the restaurant and into the parking lot and get into her car and started it up and leave Lee's. I looked at my watch. Ten minutes to one. Then I recorded what I saw Lois do and when she did it. Then I started up *my* car and followed her. Making sure that she didn't see me follow her.

I saw her go back to TechPC and park her car in the parking lot and go back into TechPC. No doubt she was going to go back to work. I looked at my watch. Three minutes to one. Then I recorded what I saw Lois do and when she did it. Then I drove by TechPC. There was no reason for me to stay and put TechPC under surveillance. I don't think Lois was going to leave TechPC before

quitting time for some reason. But I was going to go back to TechPC at quitting time and follow and watch Lois and see what she was going to do at quitting time. I would have to do that. What I could do right now was go back to the office and record what I had seen Lois do today. And did. Then I went home so I could get some sleep. I was going to need to do that. And did.

At eight minutes to five, I returned here to TechPC. I had gotten the rest I had needed, and then I had gotten something to eat and had gotten more food to eat on stakeouts and surveillance. Now I parked across the street from TechPC and watched the building.

It was getting dark out now. Dark was replacing light.

At five o'clock exactly, I saw people walking out of TechPC. Quickly I took my binoculars out of my glove compartment so I could look through them and see if Lois were one of the people who were walking

out of TechPC. She was. Still wearing the same clothes I had seen her wear before. I looked at my watch. It was still five o'clock exactly. I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Lois do and when she did it. Then I saw Lois go into the parking lot and get into her car, and then I started up *my* car, and then I saw Lois pull out of the parking lot and onto the street and drive down the street, and then I looked at my watch. Four minutes past five. Then I recorded what time I had seen Lois go into the parking lot and get into her car and leave TechPC. After that, I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and followed Lois.

I saw her go home and looked at my watch and recorded what I saw her do and when she did it. Then I parked across the street from her place and watched her place. She stayed there all night. After a while, I got tired, so I went home and went to bed; another reason why I had left when I did was because I didn't think that Lois was going to

go out tonight. Probably going to stay in for the rest of the night and then go to bed and go to work tomorrow.

And she did go to work the next day. I had seen her go to work. And she did the same things she had done before when I had put her under surveillance. Just go to work and go home and so on and so on.

But it was different on Friday. I was here at TechPC, a few minutes before quitting time. Then I saw people coming out of TechPC and go into the parking lot so they could get into their cars and leave TechPC. Quickly I took my binoculars out of my glove compartment so I could look through them and see if Lois were one of the people who was coming out of TechPC and going into the parking lot so they could get into their cars and leave. She was. She was wearing a white dress with red flowers and flesh tone stockings and red high heel shoes, and the strap of her purse was resting on her right shoulder, and her right hand was

grasping the strap of her purse; I also saw Wilcox walking out of TechPC and going into the parking lot. He was wearing a light blue long sleeve shirt, no tie, open collar, light brown pants, and black leather shoes. He was by himself this time. Then I saw everything that Lois was doing; I also saw her reach her car and get into it and start it up and drive out of the parking lot and turn onto the street and drive down the street. I looked at my watch and started up *my* car and followed Lois, making sure that she didn't see me following her, and recorded everything I saw her do and when she did it.

I followed her to the property here in Bellingham that she owned, and then I saw her pull into the driveway of the property and drive up to the garage and park her car at the garage. I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw her do and when she did it; then I looked at my watch again and recorded what I saw Lois doing now: getting

out of her car and going into the house. I watched the house.

A few minutes later, I saw her walk out of the house and get back into her car and leave. I found this peculiar. I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw her do and when she did it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket, and then I looked around to make sure that no one was going to see me go into the back of Lois's property and sneak into it. No one did. Then I took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on, and then I got out of my car and locked it, and then I crossed the street and got into the back of Lois's property and got out my lock pick set and picked the lock of the back door of the property, and then I went into the house and closed and locked the door and put my lock pick set back into my pocket and looked around the place. I found it interesting that Lois had come here to the property she owned, a place that wasn't being used, a place that wasn't

occupied, and then, a few minutes later, she had left the property. I wanted to know why. But I didn't find anything here at the place that could tell me why she had come here to the property she owned, the property that wasn't being used, the property that wasn't occupied, and then she had left the property. I wondered about this

CHAPTER IV

I stepped out of Lois's property the same way I had entered it. Then I noticed it was dark out now. Light had been completely replaced by dark. Then I crossed the street and got to my car and unlocked it and got into it and started it up and pulled away from the curb and into the street. It was time now for me to leave Lois's property. I had finished searching it.

I was driving down the street now. I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I had discovered at Lois's property, and then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and thought about what I had discovered at Lois's property. Whatever she had done at her property for as long as she had been there meant that she must have had some reason for being there and doing it for as long as she had done it. I

don't think she would have gone over to that property for no reason. And whatever it was that she had done at her property may have had to do with her accusing Wilcox of following her, or maybe what she did at her property may have to do with something else. I was going to have to find out which. And I was going to have to find out what she had done at her property and why, too. But I decided to do these things sometime next week when Lois would be at work at that time if I can. No sense doing these things this weekend. She could go back to the property some time tonight or some other time this weekend and do something else, and if she saw me there, she'd wonder why I was there, and ask me why I was there, and that could blow the investigation. I looked at my watch. Five twenty-six. What I could do right now was resume putting Lois under surveillance from her place. No sense trying to find her tonight and resume the surveillance on her. Finding her to continue

putting her under surveillance would take time. Or, what I could do when I get to her place is search her place again if I discovered she's at not home. Maybe the search could tell me why she had done what she had done at her property and why and if what she had done at her property had to do with her accusing Wilcox of following her, or if what she had done at her property had to do with something else.

I also thought about what Lois must be doing right now: whatever it was that she was doing right now may have to do with whatever it was she had done at her property. Or maybe whatever it was she was doing right now may have to do with something else.

When I got here to her place, I noticed her car wasn't here, and the light inside the living room of her apartment was on. Which meant that she didn't want burglars to get inside her place, and she wasn't at home. Because of the light being on inside the

living room of her apartment, I decided not to get inside her place and search it again. I was going to have to get into her place and search it again at a much more opportune time. But what I could do while I was here was watch her place. She would come back. And then I could resume the surveillance on her from her place. I parked my car across the street from her place and watched her place.

Three hours later, I started up my car and left Lois's place. Nothing had happened at Lois's place. She hadn't even gone back to her place. But that didn't mean she wouldn't. No doubt she would go home. And since nothing had happened at her place, and since she hadn't gone home, and since I didn't know when she was going to go home, and since looking for her in town to continue putting her under surveillance would take time, I decided to resume the investigation tomorrow. I could do that. I knew where Lois lived and worked. Because

of this, I could pick up the trail from those places. But what I could do tonight that had to do with the investigation was go over to my office and write my surveillance report on Lois. I did. Then I put the report into the folder of the file on the Latham scheme case and put the file into the filing cabinet and locked up the cabinet.

I was driving away from my office now. I had done what I had gone to the office to do. Now I looked at my watch. Eleven minutes to nine. I had time to go somewhere and get something to eat. I was getting hungry. So I looked around for a good place to eat at.

I found it: MacDonald's. I was sitting here at a booth and sipping a Coke while I waited for my order to come; I also thought about what Lois must still be doing right now: whatever it was that had to do with whatever it was she had done at her property, or she was still doing that something that had to do with something else. Or, maybe she had finished doing one

or the other, and now she was doing something else. And that something else she may be doing right now may have to do with her accusing Wilcox of following her, or whatever it was that she may be doing right now may have to do with something else.

I was eating my order now: a double meat cheeseburger and fries and washing it down with more Coke.

I felt better after I had eaten. Now I left MacDonald's and went home and got undressed and took a shower, and then I got into my pajamas and bathrobe and slippers and watched TV until ten. Then I turned the TV off and went into *my* room and turned the light on. Then I set the alarm clock for a time I wanted to get up at tomorrow morning, and then I put my gun underneath the pillow, and then I took my bathrobe and slippers off and turned off the light and got into bed and went to sleep.

I was up early the next morning. I had gotten up at the time I had wanted to get up

at. Now I was driving over to Lois's place so I could resume the surveillance on her from her place.

When I got to her place, I noticed her car wasn't here. Which meant that she had gone somewhere. This gave me the opportunity I needed to sneak into her place and search it again. I parked my car across the street from her place and looked around to make sure that no one would see me sneak into her place. No one did. Then I took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on and got out of my car and locked it and snuck into her place the same way I had snuck into her place before. Then I looked all around the place for anything that could tell me what she had done at her property last night. Such evidence could out in the open. But I didn't see anything. Then I realized that such evidence could be kept somewhere privately or secretly. I decided to start the search at her desk. Maybe the evidence was in her desk. I unlocked the drawer of her desk the

letters and cash box were in. I looked through the letters. Nothing of interest in them. Then I unlocked the cash box and counted the money in that. Some of it wasn't here. Which meant that she must have taken some of it with her when she had gone to wherever it was she had gone to before or after she had done what she had done at her property. Probably would need it. Then I removed the tray to look at what else was in the box. Then, I stopped suddenly. Then I took my camera out of my pocket and photographed it: a new entry in her bank book. And it said she had made this new deposit in her bank yesterday. It was a large one. I wondered about this. But I was going to have to think about this later. Right now I had to be here just long enough to search Lois's place. I couldn't hang around here after that. It'd be dangerous if I would. Then I put my camera back into my pocket and looked through the rest of the cash box for anything else that could tell me why Lois

had done what she had done at her property yesterday, and if it had to do with her accusing Wilcox of following her, or if what she had done at that property had to do with something else. I didn't find anything else inside the cash box that could tell me if what she did at her property had to do with her accusing Wilcox of following her, or if what she had done at her property had to do with something else, so I put the tray back into the cash box, and then I locked up the cash box, and then I put it and the letters back into the drawer and locked up the drawer. Then I unlocked the drawer the insurance policy for the platinum statue of Apollo and the papers for the property owned Lois were in and looked at the policy for the statue, and the papers for the property Lois owned. But they didn't tell me what I needed to know. Then I put the policy and the papers for the property back inside the drawer and locked up the drawer, and then I unlocked the other drawers and looked in them, but

the contents of *these* drawers didn't tell me what I needed to know. Then I locked up the drawers, and then I snuck out of Lois's place the same way I had snuck into it, and then I walked down the stairs and crossed the street and got to my car and unlocked it and got into it and started it up and drove away to my office.

When I got here to my office, I developed the film inside my camera, and then I wrote the results of my searching Lois's place, and then I printed them out and put them into the folder on the file of the Latham scheme case. After that, I turned the computer and the printer off, and then I set the file aside and looked at the photograph of the entry inside Lois's bank book. Then I sat back in my chair and thought.

The only time I had seen her go to the property she owned was yesterday after work. I hadn't seen her go to that property anything time before that. But I hadn't seen her go to her bank after work yesterday or

any other time before that, either. Then, I stopped suddenly, my gaze became fixed. That had to be it. She had taken that money out of the property she owned and put it in her bank. That would explain why she had gone directly to the property after work yesterday, and it would also explain the new entry she had made in her bank book yesterday. But if she had gone to the property and had gotten that money so she could put it in her bank, then that would mean that that money was hidden inside the property. That would explain why I hadn't seen the money or anything else inside the property. And Lois must have hidden the money there. But unfortunately this didn't tell me where the money had come from. I still didn't know if it came from the first robbery at Security Items, Inc., or if it came from somewhere else. Because of this, I still didn't know if Lois had obtained this money legally or illegally, and I still didn't know if her stealing this money had to do with her

accusing Wilcox of following her, or if her stealing this money had to do with something else.

And then Lois must have done something else after she had gotten the money from her property and had put it in the bank, and what she had done may have to do with her accusing Wilcox of following her, or what she had done may have to do with something else. Her doing one or the other would explain why I hadn't seen her car at her place last night, and why I had seen the light on inside the living room of her place last night after I had gone over to her place and put it under surveillance and after I had followed her to her property and put it under surveillance and then searched her property after I had seen her leaving the property. But I still didn't know if what she did after she had gotten that money from her property and had put it in her bank had to do with her accusing Wilcox of following, or if what she had done after she had gotten

that money from her property and put it in her bank had to do with something else.

And then there was something else: if the money were hidden, then maybe the statue of Apollo was hidden, too. That would explain why I hadn't seen it at Lois's place. Which meant that it *was* hidden. It had to be. Either inside Lois's place, or at some other place. And that would make sense: if Lois didn't want the statue stolen, then all she had to do was hide it somewhere and not tell anyone where the statue was. I looked at my watch. Four minutes to noon.

I had time to go back to Lois's place and see if the statue were hidden inside her place. So I put the photograph of the new entry of Lois's deposit in her bank inside the folder of the file on the Latham scheme case, and then I put the file into the filing cabinet, and then I locked up the cabinet, and then I stepped out of my office and closed and locked the door, and then I got into my car

and started it up and drove back to Lois's place.

I didn't see her car when I got here. Which meant that she still out, or she had come back for some reason, and then she had gone out again for some reason. I parked my car across the street from her place and snuck into her place the same way I had snuck into it before. Then I decided to start the search for the statue of Apollo inside the locked empty room. Maybe it would be there. That room got me curious: a locked empty room. I went over to it and took my electronic device out of my pocket and turned it on, and then I put the device on the dead bolt lock of the door of the room and listened. I heard the device turn the bolt inside the lock. Then I removed the device and turned it off and put it back into my pocket and opened the door and went into the room.

I stood inside the room and looked all around it. It was the same as when I had

seen it the last time I had been here: empty. I thought. If she were hiding the statue of Apollo here inside the locked empty room, then she would have to be hiding the statue behind something here inside the room, and where she could get to it when she could. I looked down at the floor. I thought it'd be highly unlikely that she would hide the statue underneath the carpet and the floor. If she were going to get to the statue, she'd have to roll the carpet back just long enough to get to the portion of the floor the statue was hiding behind. And then she'd have to remove the portion of the floor the statue was behind, and then remove the statue itself and then put the portion of the floor back into place and roll the carpet back into place. And that would take time to do. And putting the statue back where she had taken it from the same way she had removed it would take just as long. And because of this, I didn't find out if the statue were hidden underneath the carpet and the floor. Then I

looked at the walls. Nothing out of the ordinary about them. Just walls. And there were no crevices inside the walls, and there was nothing else inside the walls that indicated the statue would be hidden behind one of the walls. Then I knocked on the walls. Nothing unusual about them. They were solid. Because of the conditions of the walls, I didn't look for the statue behind the walls. Then I looked down at the sills surrounding the walls. Then, out of curiosity, I pressed the sills with my foot. Nothing. Then I pushed down on the sills with my foot. Nothing. Then, I stooped down and tried to pull the sills up. Nothing.

Then I stood up and looked at the closet. There would be the possibility that the statue would be hidden inside the closet. I walked over to the closet to find out.

The closet door was closed. I opened it and looked inside. It was still empty. Then I stepped inside the closet and knocked on the walls of the closet. The walls of the closet

were solid. Then I put my hands on them and pressed them. Nothing. Then I looked down at the floor. I saw sills surrounding the bottom of the floors of the closet. Then, I wondered. I pressed them with my foot. Nothing. Then I pushed them down with my foot. Then I stooped down to pull them up. Then, something happen after I had pulled up one portion of the sills: one of the walls of the closet slid back, revealing what was behind the wall: the statue of Apollo. And it was standing on a pedestal. Then, out of curiosity, I pushed down on that portion of the sill to see if the wall would slide back into place. It did. Then I pulled up on that portion of the wall again to continue looking at what was behind the wall. Then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I was looking at and where it was and how to get to it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and pushed down the portion of the sill with my foot to push the portion of the sill back into

place, and to slide the wall back over the statue. Then the sill went back into the place, and the wall slid back into place, concealing the statue of Apollo. Then I stepped out of the closet and closed the door, and then I left the room and closed and locked the door the same way I had unlocked the door, and then I turned the electronic device off and put it back into my pocket and snuck out of Lois's place and crossed the street and got to my car and unlocked it and got into it and started it up and drove over to my office. It was time now for me to write my report on my discovery of the statue of Apollo and where it was hidden and how to get to it. Although I wasn't going to like doing this. The investigation was still confidential. There were still some questions that needed to be answered.

CHAPTER V

I was here inside my office now. Sitting behind my desk and writing my report on my discovery of the statue of Apollo, and where it was hidden, and how to get to it. Then I printed out the report and put it into the folder of the file on the Latham scheme case, and then I turned the computer and the printer off, and then I set the file aside and sat back in my chair and thought.

Lois must have knowledge in making trap doors and hidden panels, and she made the hiding place for the statue of Apollo and put the statue inside the hiding place, and she must have also made the hiding place for her share of the money that she and those other people had stolen when they had committed that first robbery at Security Items, and then she had hidden the money inside the hiding place.

Or maybe someone else had knowledge in making trap doors and hidden panels and made the hiding place for the statue of Apollo and put the statue inside the hiding place for Lois, and he must have also made the hiding place for Lois's share of the money that she and the other people had stolen when they had committed that first robbery at Security Items and put the money inside the hiding place for Lois.

I looked at my watch. Two thirty-three. Then I called Wilcox so I could make an appointment with him. I was going to need to tell him what I had discovered so far in the case so far; not only that, maybe my telling Wilcox what I had discovered so far in the case might help us find out what was going on.

"Hello," he said when he came on.

"Hello," I said. "Is this Lloyd Wilcox?"

"Speaking,"

"Mr. Wilcox, this is Frank Hurley."

"Mr. Hurley. How are you?"

"Fine. You?"

"Fine."

"Good. I need to make an appointment with you so I can talk to you."

"Does it have to do with the case?"

"I'd rather say so on the phone."

"All right. I'm not doing anything right now."

"Good. Can you meet me here at my office as soon as you can?"

"Yeah, I can do that. I'll be right over."

"Good," Then I hung up. Then I looked at my watch. Two thirty-nine. Then I put the file on the Latham scheme case into the filing cabinet and locked up the cabinet. I wasn't going to let Wilcox read the file when he gets here. I couldn't let him read the file when he gets here. There would be some things about the case that I couldn't tell him. I didn't want to do this, but it may be necessary. But maybe later I could let him read the file. It'll depend upon what happens later, and what I can do later.

Wilcox was here at my office now. Sitting in front of my desk while I continued sitting behind my desk.

"Before I tell you what I discovered in the case so far," I told Wilcox. "I must point out to you that what we're going to talk about having to do with the case must remain here inside my office. We don't tell anyone what we're going to talk about that has to do with the case--including and especially Lois Latham. This investigation is still confidential. There are still some questions that need to be answered."

"I understand," Wilcox said.

"Good," Then I told Wilcox what I had discovered in the case so far.

"Really?" Wilcox looked and sounded surprised after I had finished.

"Yeah," I said.

"Well, that's incredible."

"Yes, it is. I have some questions: did you or anyone else know that Lois was one of the people who quit their jobs at Security Items

before the first robbery at Security Items had occurred?"

"No,"

"Which means that she must not have told anyone she had quit her job at Security Items before the first robbery at Security Items had occurred. If she did, people would think that she was in on the robbery with the rest of those people who quit Security Items before the first robbery at Security Items had occurred and get ideas about her share of the money she stole--if she stole her share of the money from Security Items. Right now it doesn't look like she and the rest of those people who quit Security Items before the first robbery at Security Items had occurred stole the money. It only looks like they quit their jobs before the robbery at Security Items had occurred. Although all of them hadn't been seen or heard from ever since the robbery. Maybe they did steal the money and disappeared, or maybe it was something else. Maybe Lois had gotten this

money from somewhere else and not Security Items. Although I don't know if she had gotten this money from that somewhere else and not Security Items legally or illegally."

"Yeah,"

"Do you know about this property she owns?"

"No, I don't,"

"Would you know if anyone else knows about this property she owns?"

"No,"

"Of course. She wouldn't want to tell anyone she has it if she's using it for something that has to do with that money. But don't ask me where that property is. You're better off not knowing. We still don't know if what she's doing is legal or illegal."

"Of course,"

"What about this statue of Apollo she owns? Have you ever seen it, or has she told you about it?"

"Both. And she's showed it and told other people about it. She even showed us a picture of it. We told her we'd like to see it, and she showed it to us. We went over to her place and saw it."

"I see. And I take it the statue was in the living room when you and other people went over to her place and saw it?"

"That's right."

"And I imagine that after you and the other people saw the statue, the statue was still in the same room when you and the other people left?"

"That's right. Why do you ask?"

"Because I don't think that Lois Latham wants you and other people to know where she's hiding the statue. As long as you and other people don't know where the statue is, you and other people can't steal it. Makes sense. You can't steal something if you don't know where it is."

"Yeah, that *does* make sense."

"Yeah. So what she does is take the statue out of its hiding place and put it into another room before people go over to her place and see the statue, after the other people see the statue and leave, she puts the statue back into its hiding place."

"Yeah. So she's hiding the statue whenever she's not showing it to anyone."

"That's right. But we can't tell her that we think that she's hiding the statue whenever she's not showing it to anyone. She won't confirm or deny what we tell her. Instead she'll just tell us that where she keeps the statue whenever she's not showing it to anyone is not important. And she'll be within her legal rights to say that since she legally owns the statue. And we can't ask her where she's hiding the statue, either. She won't tell us. And she'll be within her legal rights not to tell us where she's hiding the statue since she legally owns the statue, too."

"Of course. So what do we do now?"

"*You* continue doing what you've done before: on your time and hers, leave her alone and don't follow her. And keep your eyes and ears open. On company time, you work with her. And keep your eyes and ears open. And if she wants you to do something with her on your time and hers, do it. And keep your eyes and ears open and tell me what you've seen or heard, but don't ask her any questions about what she's doing. But don't ask her any questions about whatever it is that she might be up to whenever you and her are on your own time and hers and you're leaving her alone and not following her, and whenever the two of you are at work, and if or whenever you do whatever it is that she wants to do with you on your time and hers."

"All right."

"As for me, *I'm* going to continue doing what I've done before and investigate that property of hers sometime next week while she's at work. I don't want to investigate it

this weekend. If I do, and she appears at the property, she might wonder why I'm there, and ask me why I'm there. And that could blow the investigation."

"I understand. Anything else, Mr. Hurley?"

"No. I think that's it. But remember. Everything we've talked about? It doesn't leave this office. We don't tell anyone what we've talked about--"

"Including and especially Lois."

"That's right."

"I understand."

"Good,"

Then Wilcox and I stood up and shook hands.

"Thank you for coming in, Mr. Wilcox," I said to him.

"You're welcome, Mr. Hurley," he said.
"And good luck on the investigation."

"Thank you. I'll need it."

Wilcox left. He was wearing a brown suit and a white shirt and a black tie and leather shoes.

I unlocked the filing cabinet and took the file on the Latham scheme case out of it and put the file on my desk, and then I sat down behind my desk and turned the computer on, and then I wrote a summary on everything that Wilcox and I had talked about that had to do with the case. I was going to need to do that. I was glad that Wilcox and I had had our discussion about the case. The discussion had told me some things that I had needed to know; and I was glad that Wilcox hadn't asked me if I had found the statue of Apollo. I would have told him that I couldn't tell him if I had found the statue or not. He would have been better off not knowing if I had found the statue or not. We still didn't know if what Lois were doing was legal or illegal; and another reason why I couldn't tell Wilcox if I had found the statue or not was because I wasn't

supposed to know where the statue was whenever Lois wasn't showing the statue to anyone as well as Wilcox and other people weren't supposed to know where the statue was whenever Lois wasn't showing the statue to anyone.

In other words, I was keeping Lois's secret.

But if I find out that what Lois were doing was illegal and not legal, then the hiding place of the statue may be revealed.

After I had finished writing the summary on everything that Wilcox and I had talked about that had to do with the case, I turned the printer on and printed out the summary and put the summary into the folder of the file on the Latham scheme case. Then I turned the computer and the printer off and put the file on the Latham scheme case back into the filing cabinet and locked up the cabinet. Then I looked at my watch. Three eleven.

Except for my going over to Lois's property and investigating it, which I had decided to do some time next week, I could resume doing the other things in the investigation today or tomorrow. So I decided to resume doing these things tomorrow. What I could do today, and should do today, was get something to eat and get some sleep. I was going to need to do *those* two things. So I stepped out of my office and closed and locked the door. Then I walked out into the parking lot and went to my car and unlocked it and got into it and started it up and pulled away from my office so I could leave my office and go get something to eat and then get some sleep.

CHAPTER VI

The next day, I drove over to Lois's place to continue putting her under surveillance. It was still dark out; and it was still very early in the morning, too. The reason why I was going over to her place this early in the morning was because I wanted to get to her place before she gets up and does whatever she's going to do today. Then put her under surveillance.

When I got here to her place, I noticed that the light inside her place was off. Which meant that she must still be in bed. I parked my car across the street and watcher her place.

An hour and a half later, it was getting light out. Light was replacing dark. I looked at my watch. Six minutes to seven. Then I poured myself a cup of coffee and took a sandwich out of the bag of groceries and

sipped the coffee and eat the sandwich while continued watching Lois's place.

I felt better after I had eaten. Then I noticed Lois coming out of her apartment. She was wearing a long sleeve white shirt and blue jeans and white high heel shoes, and the strap of her purse was resting on her right shoulder, and her right hand was grasping the strap of her purse. Then I noticed whose car she was getting into: Jake Barlow's car. Jake was a freelance insurance investigator. He did most of his work for Transmutual, the same insurance company that was insuring Lois's statue of Apollo. I knew Jake. He and I had gone back a ways.

I thought about this: Lois getting into Jake's car? Probably nothing. Probably something. I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded my seeing Lois's getting into Jake car, and when I had seen her do it. Then I saw Jake and Lois drive away. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and

started up my car and followed Jake and Lois.

As I followed them, I wondered. Jake must have met Lois somewhere yesterday while I had been working yesterday. And then they must have done something after that. Then they must have made a date to do something today, and now they must be on their way to do whatever it was that they were going to do on their date. Probably nothing. Probably something.

And then there was something else: I hadn't seen or heard from or heard about Jake until today. Probably nothing. Probably something.

The reason why I was wondering why Jake had appeared at this particular time and was doing what he was doing with Lois was because maybe he was working right now. Lois did have Transmutual insure her statue. And Jake's appearing when he had and doing what he was doing with Lois right now had to do with Lois's statue. Or, maybe Jake

wasn't working right now, and he was interested in Lois.

I had to wonder about what Jake was doing now. Maybe what he was doing now had to do with the case, or maybe what he was doing now had to do with something else.

I followed Jake and Lois over to Bellis Fair and saw them park inside the parking lot here at Bellis Fair, and then I saw them get out of Jake's forest green Camaro, and then I saw Jake lock his car. He still looked the same as ever: tall, thin, rather handsome, had blond hair, a thin matching mustache above his thin lips, and he was wearing a black leather jacket and a blue T shirt and blue jeans and black tennis shoes.

Jake and Lois walked away from Jake's car, and then I parked *my* car in the parking lot, and then I saw Jake and Lois go over to the mall, and then I looked at my watch, and then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded the fact that Jake and

Lois had arrived here at Bellis Fair, and when they had done it, and what they were doing now and when they were doing it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and got out of my car and locked it, and then I followed Jake and Lois. Then I saw them go into the mall, and then I veered off when I got to the door, and then I walked over to the door to look inside it. Then I saw Jake and Lois standing in line at Old Country Buffet. Which meant that they were going to have brunch. Because of this I went back to my car. No sense going into Old Country Buffet and continue putting Lois under surveillance. She and Jake would see me doing it, might ask me what I was doing, and that could blow the investigation. And putting Lois under surveillance from my car would be better than putting her under surveillance from the Old Country Buffet.

I was here at my car now. Sitting inside it and watching the Old Country Buffet and eating a sandwich and sipping some coffee; I

also recorded the fact that I had seen Jake and Lois stand in line at the Old Buffet, and when I had seen them do it.

Since I didn't know how long Jake and Lois were going to be inside the Old Country Buffet, I was going to have to stay here inside my car and find out how long they were going to be inside the Old Country Buffet before they do what else they were going to do on their date. Then I could continue the surveillance on Lois after she and Jake are finished inside the Old Country Buffet. I continued watching the Old Country Buffet.

Two hours went by. Conditions were still the same as they had been before. I didn't see Jake and Lois come out of the mall and get into Jake's car and leave. But I didn't see them leave the mall and go do something else, either. Which meant that they must still be inside the mall, and maybe still at the Old Country Buffet, or, they had finished eating at the Old Country Buffet and had left

the Old Country Buffet, and now they were somewhere else inside the mall, doing something else. I decided to take a chance on seeing if Jake and Lois were still at the Old Country Buffet. I got out of my car and locked it, and then I went into the mall.

Here inside the mall, I walked past the Old Country Buffet and casually looked inside it. I didn't see Jake and Lois inside it. Which meant that they must not be inside the Old Country Buffet now. They had finished their brunch and left the Old Country Buffet. And now they must be doing something else here inside the mall since I hadn't seen them go back to Jake's car and leave.

I did pick up their trail. They *were* doing some shopping, and I kept track of time and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois were doing, and when they were doing it.

Later on, Jake and Lois walked out of the mall and back to Jake's car and got into it, and then they left the mall. I followed them

and recorded what I saw them do and when they did it, and then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and got into *my* car and started it up and followed them.

I followed them back to Lois's place, and then I saw Lois get out of Jake's car and go up to her apartment and go into her apartment; I also saw Jake watch Lois go up to and into her apartment. Then I saw Jake leave. Then I looked at my watch, and then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when they did it, and then I pulled up to the curb across the street from Lois's place and parked my car, and then I watched Lois's place. I poured myself a new cup of coffee and pulled another sandwich out of the bag of groceries and sipped the coffee and eat the sandwich while I watched Lois's place. Then I realized that Lois must be sleeping off all of that food she had eaten at the Old Country Buffet right now. There would be that possibility. Because of this I

decided to take a chance on going over to the office and writing the latest surveillance report on Lois, and write my report on what I had seen Jake do. Although I wasn't going to like writing my report on what I had seen Jake do. But I was going to have to do it. Whether I wanted to or not. Then I could go over to the store and get more food for the stakeouts and surveillance, and then go home and get some sleep myself, and then come back here and resume the surveillance. I wouldn't like doing it, since I would need to keep Lois under twenty four hour surveillance, but I couldn't keep her under surveillance all of the time. So I started up my car and left so I could do those three things before I come back here to Lois's place and continue putting it under surveillance.

I was here at my office now. Sitting behind my desk and writing the latest surveillance report on Lois, and writing my report on what I had seen Jake do. Then I

put both reports into the folder of the file on the Latham scheme case, and then I put the file into the filing cabinet and locked up the filing cabinet.

After I was done here at the office, I went and did the other two things I could do before I go back to Lois's place and put it under surveillance.

I was back here at Lois's place now. I had gotten the food for the stakeouts and surveillance I was going to need, and then I had gone home and had gotten the sleep I was going to need and made some more coffee to drink on the stakeouts and surveillance. Now I was parked my car across the street from Lois's place and watching Lois's place.

A few hours later, Jake showed up. I watched what he did. He stopped in front of Lois's place, and then Lois came out of her apartment and locked it, and then she walked down the stairs. She was wearing a light blue long sleeve blouse and blue jeans

and black high heel shoes, and the strap of her purse was resting on her right shoulder, and her right hand was grasping the strap of her purse.

She got into Jake's car, and then she and Jake drove off. I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when they did it, and then I put my voice recorder away and started up my car and followed Jake and Lois.

I saw them go out to Bellis Fair again. Then I saw them park inside the parking lot of Bellis Fair, and then I saw them get out of Jake's car. Tonight Jake was wearing a midnight blue coat and a black shirt and black pants and black leather shoes. Then I saw Jake lock his car, and then I saw Jake and Lois go into Boston Pizza. Then I parked *my* car a few yards away from Boston Pizza and watched Boston Pizza and looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded the fact that I had seen Jake and Lois go into Boston Pizza, and

when I had seen them go into Boston Pizza. After that, I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and watched Boston Pizza. So it looked like Jake and Lois were going to have dinner here at Boston Pizza.

About an hour and a half later, I saw Jake and Lois walk out of Boston Pizza and up to Bellis Fair. I looked at my watch and got out my voice recorder and recorded what I saw them do and when they did it. After that, I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and got out of my car and locked it, and then I followed Jake and Lois as far as the door to Bellis Fair. Then I saw Jake and Lois go into Bellis Fair, and then I veered off from the door and walked back to it to look inside it. I saw Jake and Lois go into the theatre. I looked at my watch and got out my voice recorder and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when they did it. After that, I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and walked away from Bellis Fair. If Jake and Lois were going to see a movie, then they'd

be inside the theatre long enough to see the movie. They wouldn't be doing anything else inside the theatre; and I didn't want to go into the theatre because I didn't want them to see me.

I went over to Boston Pizza to have dinner. I knew I could do that since it looked Jake and Lois were going to be in the theatre and watch their movie. And they'd be there in the theatre just long enough to see their movie. I wouldn't have to put the theatre under surveillance from my car.

I was here at Boston Pizza now. Sitting at a booth and sipping Pepsi and waiting for my order to come and looked out the window to watch the theatre.

My order came, and then I dug right into it: chicken Alfredo, and I washed it down with more Pepsi. For dessert I had strawberry cheesecake.

I felt better after I had eaten. Then I had more Pepsi and continued watching the theatre.

I finished my Pepsi, and then I left a nice tip on the table and paid my check and left the restaurant and went back to my car and unlocked it and got into it and continued watching the theatre. I wouldn't want Jake and Lois to see me walk out of Boston Pizza if they walk out of Bellis Fair at the same time I leave Boston Pizza. This might blow the investigation.

It was getting dark out now. Light was being replaced by dark.

About an hour and fifteen minutes later, it was completely dark out. Light had been completely replaced by dark.

I saw Jake and Lois walk out of Bellis Fair. I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do, and when they did it. Then I saw them walk over to Boston Pizza and go into the restaurant. I looked at my watch and recorded the fact that Jake and Lois were going into Boston Pizza, and when I saw them do it. So it looked like Jake

and Lois were going to eat at Boston Pizza again after they had seen their movie. I watched the restaurant.

About two hours later, I saw Jake and Lois walk out of Boston Pizza. I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when they did it. Then I saw them walk over to Jake's car and get into it and leave Bellis Fair. I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when they did it, and then I started up *my* car and followed them.

I followed them back to Lois's place. Then I saw Jake stop at Lois's place, and then I saw Lois get out of Jake's car and go up to her apartment and go into her apartment, and then I saw Jake watching Lois go up to her apartment and go into her apartment. Then I saw Jake leave. Then I looked at my watch and got out my voice recorder and recorded when Jake and Lois had come back here to Lois's place, and what they were

doing at Lois's place and when Jake left. Then I put my voice recorder away and pulled over to the curb across the street from Lois's place and parked my car here and continued watching Lois's place.

A few minutes later, I saw a light inside Lois's living room being turned on. But the light wasn't very bright. Which meant that the light she had turned on wasn't a light. Instead it must be the TV she had turned on. Light would be emitted from the TV. I looked at my watch and recorded what I had just seen and when I had seen it.

After a while, I saw that light disappearing. Which meant that Lois must have stopped watching TV, and maybe she was going to go to bed right now. She was going to go to work tomorrow. And because of this, she was going to need to get a good night's sleep. I looked at my watch and recorded what I had just seen. Then I realized that if Lois had gone to bed so she could get a good night's sleep for work

tomorrow, then there would be any need for me to continue putting her under surveillance any more tonight. I could go home and get some sleep, too. Although I wasn't going to like doing this. I would want to continue putting Lois under surveillance. But I also realized that I couldn't do this all the time. So I started up my car and left Lois's place and went home and got some sleep.

The next morning, I was here at Lois's place. It was still dark out. I had arrived here at Lois's place before I could put Lois under surveillance, which was what I had wanted to do. Now I was watching Lois's place and eating a sandwich and sipping coffee.

Two hours later, light replaced dark. I was still watching Lois's place. Nothing unusual had happened.

Two hours later, I saw Lois walk out of her apartment and lock it. She was wearing a long sleeve purple blouse and a gray tweed dress and flesh tone stockings and black

high heel shoes, and the strap of her purse was resting on her right shoulder.

I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw Lois do and when she did it. Then I saw her walk downstairs and go over to her car and get into it and start it up and drive away. No doubt she was going to go work. That was going to give me the opportunity I'd need to go over to her property and look at it again. I looked at my watch and recorded my seeing Lois leave her place and when she did it, and then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and started up *my* car so I could leave Lois's place and go over to the property she owned and look at it again. Then, I stopped suddenly, my gaze became fixed. I sat erect.

Jake came back here to Lois's place and parked his car a few car lengths away from Lois's place and on the same side of the street that Lois's place was on. Then he looked around. Then he got out of his car and locked it. He was wearing black gloves

this time. Then he went up to Lois's place and took his lock pick set out of his pocket and picked the lock of the front door of Lois's place and went into Lois's place and closed the door behind him as quickly and silently as he could.

CHAPTER VII

Quickly I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake do and when he did it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and turned the motor off and withdrew the radio to the bug I had planted inside Lois's place from my pocket and listened in on what was going on inside Lois's place. It sounded like Jake was moving around inside Lois's place. I wondered what it was that Jake was doing inside Lois's place. Maybe it had to do with the case, or maybe it had to do with something else. But whatever it was that Jake was doing inside Lois's place, it had to do with Lois, since Jake was doing something inside Lois's place.

About forty five minutes later, I saw Jake step out of Lois's place and close the door. I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw

Jake do and when he did it. Then I saw Jake walk down the stairs and go over to his car and get into it and drive away. I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw Jake do and when he did it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and turned the radio to the bug inside Lois's place off and put it back into my pocket, and then I looked around to make sure that no one was going to see sneak into Lois's place. No one did. Then I took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on, and then I got out of my car and locked it, and then I crossed the street and snuck into Lois's place the same way I had done before so I could search her place to find out what Jake had done inside it.

I was here inside Lois's place now. Looking around the place to find out what it was that Jake had done inside Lois's place. But I didn't find anything that had been tampered with or removed or put here. And it looked like everything here inside Lois's

place hadn't been moved around. Everything was in its place. Even the statue of Apollo was in its hiding place. Then I snuck out of Lois's place the same way I had snuck into it, and then I crossed the street and unlocked my car, and then I got into it and pulled away from the curb and into the street so I could go over to Lois's property and search that. It was time now for me to do that.

I was driving down the street now; I also thought about what it was that Jake had done inside Lois's place. He had to have done something inside Lois's place. He hadn't snuck into her place for no reason. But nothing had been tampered with or removed from or put there. And everything was in its place. Nothing had been moved around or changed. Even the statue of Apollo was still in its hiding place. Which meant that Jake must have done something else inside the place that required him not to tamper with something inside Lois's place, or remove something from Lois's place, or

add something to Lois's place, or move something around inside Lois's place, or change something inside Lois's place. Which meant that there was one thing that he could do inside Lois's place that would require him not to tamper with something inside Lois's place, or remove something from Lois's place, or add something to Lois's place, or move something around inside Lois's place, or change something inside Lois's place, and he had done this thing: he had searched Lois's place. But for what? And why had he searched Lois's place?

And then there was his meeting Lois and doing things with her: he was probably going to ask her about whatever it was he was searching for as well as he had searched Lois's place for whatever it was he had searched Lois's place for.

And maybe his searching for whatever it was that he was searching for was one the things he was doing in an assignment he had gotten from Transmutual, and the

assignment had to do with Lois, or maybe the reason why he had searched Lois's place had to do with something else. But whatever the reason was, I was going to have to find out what the reason was. And I was going to have to find out what that reason was when I can. Right now there was the matter of Lois's property to look into again.

I was here at Lois's property now. Walking through it and looking all around it and wondering where here inside the property that money was hidden. And it had to be hidden here inside the property. And maybe Lois had made, or had made for her, the same kind of hiding place for the money that was the same as the hiding place for the statue of Apollo. There would be that possibility. But more like probability or fact. Then, I thought of something: what if Lois had a hiding place for the money inside one of the closets here inside the property? Just like there was the hiding place inside the closet of the empty room at her place for the

statue of Apollo. There would be that possibility. It would make her getting to the money easier. I decided to search for the money at the first closet I come to.

I came to the closet inside the hall. I looked inside it and searched for a hiding place the same way I had searched for and had found the hiding place of the statue of Apollo. Nothing. No hiding place for the money. And no money. I came to another closet inside another room and searched it for a hiding place and for the money that would be inside the hiding place the same way I had searched for and had found the hiding place for the statue of Apollo. Nothing here. No hiding place. No money. Then I went to another closet inside another room and searched the closet here. Nothing here. No hiding place. No money. Then I went onto another closet inside another room and searched it--then I got lucky. There was a hiding place inside the closet. The same as the hiding place inside the

closet inside the empty room at Lois's place that hid the statue of Apollo. And it could be gotten to the same way I had gotten to the hiding place inside the closet inside the empty room at Lois's place that hid the statue of Apollo: by way of the sill on the floor: pull up on it and the wall of the closet sides back. Push down on the sill and the wall slides back into place. And behind this wall of the closet of the room here at Lois's property were a safe and a hand truck. The safe was tall and rectangular and flesh colored, and on it was a key pad combination lock and a handle. I got the hand truck out of the hiding place and balanced the safe on the hand truck so I could take the safe out its hiding place and examined it, and as I did that, I noticed that the safe was lightweight. It was almost as light as a feather. This made taking the safe out its hiding place easier. But then I realized that if the safe were lightweight, it

must also be durable and strong. There would be that possibility.

After I had taken the safe out of its hiding place, I set it on the floor and looked at the key pad combination lock on the safe. Then, I took a bottle of fingerprint dust out of my pocket and put some of it on the keys of the key pad combination lock, and then I blew the dust off of the key pad. Now I could see the fingerprints on the key pad combination lock. And these fingerprints must belong to Lois. Then I pressed the numbers on the key pad--and then it happened: the door of the safe opened. Then I looked inside the safe. Then, I stopped suddenly, my jaw became taut. Then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw inside the safe: money. Lots of it. At least a few million. Then I closed the door of the safe, and then I wiped the fingerprint dust off of the key pad combination lock so Lois won't see it, and then I looked at all of the sides of the safe to

see if there were anything else about the safe that could tell me what Lois was doing, but I didn't see anything. Not even the brand name of the safe; I examined the hand truck, too. The same. Nothing on it that could tell me what Lois was doing. Not even the brand name was on the hand truck. Then I put the safe back into its hiding place, and then I put the hand truck back into the hiding place, and I stooped down and pulled up the part of the sill on the floor, and then the wall slid back into place, and the sill on the floor went back into place. Then I searched the rest of the property for anything else that could tell me about Lois's accusing Wilcox of following her, but I didn't anything else about that. Then I left the property the same way I had entered it and crossed the street and got into my car and left so I could go to the office and write my latest report on what I had discovered at Lois's place and property and think about what I had discovered.

I was here at my office now. Sitting behind my desk and writing my latest report on what I had discovered at Lois's place, and what I had discovered at Lois's property. Then I printed out the report and put it into the file on the Latham scheme case, and then I turned the computer and the printer off and set the file on the Latham scheme case aside, and then I sat back in my chair and thought about what I had discovered inside Lois's place and at her property.

So it looked like Lois had hidden that money inside her property. She had to have done it. But this money still didn't tell me if the money she had hidden inside her property came from the first robbery at Security Items, or if the money came from something else. And because of this, I still didn't know if what she were doing was legal or illegal, and I still didn't know if what she were doing had to do with her accusing Wilcox of following her, or if what she were doing had to do with something else. But the

safe the money was in, and the hand truck, could tell me if what she were doing was legal or illegal, and if what she were doing had to do with her accusing Wilcox of following her, or if what she were doing had to do with something else. So I turned on the computer to find out what I can about the safe and the truck hand. I began my search at Security Items. Maybe *they* could tell me what I needed to know. Although they were out of business now.

They did. Both the safe and the hand truck had been made and sold by Security Items. I turned on the printer and printed out this information and put it into the file on the Latham scheme case, and then I turned the computer and the printer off, and then I sat back in my chair and thought.

That had to be it: Lois and those other people who had quit Security Items a few days before the first robbery at Security Items had occurred must have bought safes and hand trucks from Security Items a few

days before they had quit Security Items, and then they removed the brand names from the safes and the hand trucks, and destroyed the brand names and the paperwork that said they bought the safes and the hand trucks from Security Items, and then they had quit Security Items and committed the first robbery at Security Items and put all of that money into their safes and wheeled their safes out of the building on their hand trucks and into their cars and sped away. Their using the safes and the hand trucks in their robbing Security Items must have made their robbing Security Items easier. And they must have planned to use the safes and the hand trucks in their robbing Security Items when they had planned their robbing Security Items, too. And because of all of this, it looked like Lois and those other people had caused that first robbery at Security Items. But since the statute of limitations on robbery had run out, it looked

like this money was Lois's and the other people's. And they could do what she wanted with it. And Lois must have taken some of her share of this money out of the safe and put it in her bank, too. That would explain why she had gone to her property after work, and the new deposit entry in her bank book.

But there was still the matter of Dawson getting caught at stealing from Security Items and not Lois and the other people who had committed the first robbery at Security Items. Why did *that* happen? There had to be a reason for that. And I was still wondering about it. . . .

I was getting hungry so I looked at my watch. Three minutes to noon.

If I hurry, I might make it to Taco Del Mar and get my lunch before a crowd forms. Taco Del Mar was another one of my favorite places to eat at. And I had eaten there before, too, and I was in the mood to eat there again, also. I put the file on the Latham

scheme case into my filing cabinet and locked up the cabinet.

I was here at Taco Del Mar now. I had gotten my lunch before a crowd had formed. Now I was sitting at a table next to the window and looking out the window and eating my usual Super Burrito and washing it down with Coke.

I felt better after I had eaten. Now I was having more Coke and thinking about the investigation.

There was still more investigating in the Latham scheme case to do before I could report my findings to Wilcox and then he and I decide what to do next.

And then there was what Jake was doing. I was going to have to look into that.

Right now I was doing more thinking about both cases than anything else. Because of this I decided to continue thinking about both cases. But I decided to continue thinking about both cases at home. So I

finished my Coke and left Taco Del Mar and went home.

CHAPTER VIII

"That has to be it! It couldn't be anything else!"

The words were ringing in my brain as I sat here inside my living room and watched TV and sipped coffee and continued thinking about both cases.

I think I figured out why Dawson had been caught at stealing from Security Items and not Lois and the other people who had committed the first robbery at Security Items: Lois and those other people had wanted Dawson to get caught at stealing from Security Items. Lois and those other people had found out that Dawson had been stealing from his own company. And so they had planned and executed that first robbery at Security Items so they could get back the money that Dawson had been stealing from them. And when the authorities had looked

into the first robbery, they had discovered that Dawson had been stealing from Security Items and arrested him.

And then there were the number of deposits that Lois had been making at her bank: she was moving her share of the money she had robbed from Security Items out of the property she owned and into her bank. But she was moving this money out of her property and into her bank gradually. If she moved all of the money out of her property and into the bank all at once, people would see what she was doing and get ideas about the money.

And now it looked like what Lois was doing was legal. And now it looked like the plan that Lois and those other people had planned and executed to cause the first robbery at Security Items was a means for them to get back the money that Dawson had stolen from them, and to keep Dawson from stealing any more money from his own company.

And now it looked like Lois had gotten her share of this money that she and these other people had gotten from the first robbery at Security Items that she and these other people had committed and not from something else.

And because of all of these circumstances, it looked like Wilcox and I were going to have to leave Lois alone and let her continue doing what she was doing.

But there was still the matter of Jake. I still had to find out what *he* was doing. Because of this, I couldn't close the Latham scheme case. What he was doing had to do with Lois. It looked like he wanted something from her. He had already searched her place for it, whatever it was, and he had already met her and was being friendly with her to get from her whatever it was he wanted, but I didn't know if he had or will search Lois's property to find what he was looking for. Because of this, I was going to have to find out if he were going to search

Lois's property or already searched Lois's property for whatever it was he wanted. Quickly I downed all of my coffee and turned off the TV and left the living room and went into my room and got dressed and left my place and got into my car and drove over to Lois's property.

When I got here to Lois's property, I searched it. The money was still inside its hiding place. And so was the hand truck. And everything else about the property was the same as the last time I had been here. Although, at that time, I hadn't checked the garage. But this time I did. But I didn't find anything interesting inside the garage. There weren't even any hiding places inside the garage.

Then I went back into the house and stepped into the closet in the hall and put a bug on the ceiling of the closet. In case Jake would come here to Lois's property to find out whatever it was he wanted from Lois, I'll know. Then I left Lois's property the same

way I had entered it the last time I had been here. Then I crossed the street and got into my car and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I had discovered inside Lois's property and that I had put the bug inside Lois's property and why. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and watched Lois's property and thought about what I had discovered inside Lois's property this time.

Jake may not have come here to Lois's property to look for whatever it was that he wanted from her. Because of this, he would come here to Lois's property and look for whatever it was he wanted from Lois. And in the course of his doing this, he may or may not discovered the money. But if Jake had been here at Lois's property and had looked for whatever it was he wanted from Lois, but he didn't find it, then he may not have discovered the money. That would explain why the money was still inside its hiding place. And because of this, he may not come

back here to Lois's property since he had already searched it. Just like Lois's apartment. He had searched that. But he hadn't found what he was looking for there. And he hadn't the statue of Apollo, either. That would explain why the statue was still inside its hiding place. And because of that, he may not go back Lois's apartment. But there was Lois herself. Jake had met her and was being friendly with her and doing things with her. Which meant that he was going to ask her where it was what he wanted from her. But I don't think that Jake was going to come straight out and ask Lois where it was he wanted from her. If he would, she won't tell him. And that would be the end of it. Jake would not be able to get whatever it was he wanted to get from Lois. Because of this, he was going to have to ask Lois where it was that he wanted from her subtly.

Then, I saw Jake driving down the street. Quickly I looked at my watch and got my voice recorder out and recorded what I saw

Jake do and when I did it. Then I watched what Jake was doing. Then I saw him pull over to the curb on the same side of the street Lois's property on and park his car. Then I saw him look around. Then I saw him get out of his car and lock it. He was wearing an off-white coat and a yellow shirt and brown pants and black leather shoes. Then I saw him go into the back of Lois's property. I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw him do and when he did it. Then I took the radio to the bug I had planted inside Lois's property out of my pocket and turned it on and listened to what Jake was doing now. It sounded like he was picking the lock of the back door of the house. And he must have taken his gloves out of his pocket and put them before he picked the lock, too. Then I heard him go into the house and close and lock the door. Then I heard him move around.

But he wasn't inside the house for very long. He came out of the house and walked

over to the garage. And he was wearing gloves. I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw him do and when he did it. Then I saw him pick the lock of the side door of the garage and go into the garage and close and lock the door. I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw him do and when he did it. Then I continued watching the garage.

But he wasn't in there for very long. I saw him walk out of the garage and close and lock the door. I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw him do and when he did it. Then I saw him take his gloves off and put them back into his pocket and leave Lois's property and go back to his car and unlock it and get into it and start it up and drove away. I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw Jake do and when he did it. Then I turned off the radio to the bug inside the Lois's property and put the radio back into my pocket, and then I got out of my car and locked it and crossed the street and took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on so

I could sneak inside Lois's property and look around there.

I was here inside the house Lois owned now. Looking around. Nothing. Not even the money had been tampered with or removed. It was still inside its hiding place. So was the hand truck. Then I snuck out of the house and closed and locked the back door, and then I went over to the garage and picked the lock of the side door and went into the garage and closed and locked the door and looked around. Nothing. Then I stepped out of the garage and closed and locked the door, and then I took my gloves off and put them back into my pocket and left Lois's property and crossed the street and got back to my car and unlocked it and got into it and started it up and drove away. It was time now for me to go somewhere and think about what I had discovered at Lois's property. I left the bug inside Lois's property . I don't think that Jake was going to go back

to Lois's property again for some reason. But, just in case.

I was here at Jack in the Box now. Sitting at a booth and sipping a Coke and thought about what I had discovered at Lois's property: what Jake had done at Lois's property, and what he had done at Lois's apartment, and his being friendly with Lois, confirmed what I suspected: Jake wanted something from Lois. But he didn't know where it was. But he was going to find out where it was and get it.

And then there was Lois herself. What was going to happen to her after Jake finds and gets what he wants from her? That is, if Jake finds and gets what he wants from her.

I was going to have to find these things out. But there were some other things that I hadn't searched that I could search that might help me find out what it was that Jake wanted from Lois and what would happen to Lois after Jake finds and gets whatever it was that he wanted from Lois. That is, if he finds

and get what he wants from Lois; his office, his home, Transmutual, and the other insurance companies he did work for.

And as an added measure, I could also drive by Lois's home and property and work to see how she was doing. To put her under protective surveillance. Then I looked at my watch. Two o'clock. Exactly.

Then I decided to search these places and execute the added measure tomorrow. I could search these things tomorrow and execute the added measure tomorrow. It was getting late in the day, and there were certain things that I didn't like doing late in the day. But what I could do today was go back to the office and make my latest report on what I had discovered at Lois's property and take the rest of the day off so I could rest up and recuperate. I could do that. I finished my Coke and left Jack in the Box and went over to my office.

CHAPTER IX

The next morning, I was here at my place. Yesterday I had gone back to my office and had made the latest report on what I had discovered at Lois's property yesterday after I had finished working yesterday, and then I had taken the rest of the day off and had rested up and had recuperated. Then I had gotten up early this morning and had had breakfast. Now I called Transmutual and all of the other insurance companies that Jake did work and asked them if Jake were working on something that had to do with Lois and told them what I was working on and what I had discovered up to now. Then they told me that Jake wasn't working on something for them that had to do with Lois. Then I asked them not to tell Jake what I was doing. It might make matters worse if they would. And they told me that they won't tell

Jake what I was doing. And I thanked them for it. Then *they* told *me* that if there were anything they could do to help, I let them know. I told them I would. Then we hung up.

I had done some work for Transmutual and the other insurance companies that Jake had done work for, and I still did work for them.

I had worked with Jake on an insurance case once before, too. Transmutual had hired Jake to look into this something that was secret and had hired me to help him find out what this something was. Since he had found out that I looked into anything secret or illegal. And he and I had found out about this something and had solved the case. And Jake and I had become good friends, too.

The next thing I did was go into the bathroom and shave, and then I went into *my* room and got out of my bathrobe and pajamas and slippers and into street clothes,

and then I left my place and got into my car and drove over to Jake's office so I continue my investigation of Jake.

Jake's office was on State Street.

When I got here, I noticed his car was parked across the street from his office. Which meant that he must be inside his office right now. And because of that, I wasn't going to be able to get inside his office and search it right now. I was going to have to get inside his office and search it later when he wasn't going to be in his office. But since I was here right now, what I could do right now was put a tiny homing device on his car and put a bug inside his car. I parked *my* car a few car lengths away from Jake's car, and then I looked around to see if anyone were going to see what I was going to do and took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on, and then I noticed no one was going to see what I was going to do, and then I got out of my car and went over to Jake's car and put the homing device behind

the license plate on the front end of Jake's car, and then I picked the lock of the door of Jake's car and got into his car and put the bug underneath the dashboard of Jake's car. Then I got out of Jake's car and locked it, and then I went back to *my* car and got into it and started it up and left and took the receiver to the homing device out of my pocket and put it on the seat of my car and turned it on and watched it as well as I drove. Since I didn't know how long Jake was going to be inside his office, I was going to have to come back to it later and search it. What I could do right now was right now was go over to his home and search it.

His home was on Woburn Street.

I was driving away from his home now. I had searched it and bugged it and tapped his phone. Now I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I had found inside Jake's home: nothing. There was nothing there that could tell me what it was that he wanted from Lois. Then I put my

voice recorder back into my pocket and thought: maybe there *was* nothing there that could tell me what it was that he wanted from Lois, or maybe he did have something that could tell me what it was that he wanted from Lois, and he was keeping it somewhere else. I looked at my watch. Thirteen minutes to nine. Then I looked at the homing device. No signal. Which meant that Jake must still be at his office. I went over to *my* office so I could record the latest findings I had made on whatever it was that Jake wanted from Lois. I could do that while I had the time to do it.

I was here at my office now. Sitting behind my desk and writing that record and watching the receiver to the homing device.

After I had finished writing the record, I turned the printer on and printed out the record and put the record inside the folder of the file on the Latham scheme case, and then I turned the computer and the printer off, and then I put the file back into the

filing cabinet and locked up the cabinet. Then I looked at my watch. Nine fourteen. Then I looked at the receiver to the homing. No signal. Which meant that Jake must still be inside his office. Then I stepped out of my office and locked the door, and then I went out into the parking lot and unlocked my car and got into it, and then I started it up and left the office. What I could do until Jake leaves his office, and then I go over to his office and get into it and search it, was execute that added measure. I did. I had seen Lois's car at work. Which meant that she must be at work right now. I hadn't heard or seen anything going on at Lois's home or property. Which meant that nothing was going on at those places. Now I was driving back to my office and glancing at the receiver to the homing device so I could continue watching the receiver to the homing device there. There was no telling when I'd see the signal on the receiver. So I might as well wait to see the signal from my

office instead of drive around and wait to see the signal. I didn't want to waste the time and the gas driving around while I wait to see the signal. Then, I saw the signal. The arrow on the receiver flashed. I went over to Jake's office.

When I got here, I noticed Jake's car wasn't here. Which meant that he must have left his office for some reason. I parked my car across the street from Jake's office and looked around to make sure that no one was going to see me sneak into Jake's office and search it. No one did. Then I took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on and got out of my car and locked it and crossed the street and snuck into Jake's office.

I was driving away from Jake's office now. I had searched it and bugged it and tapped his phone. Now I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I had found inside Jake's office: nothing. There was nothing inside Jake's office that could tell me what it was that Jake wanted from Lois.

Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and thought: maybe there was nothing inside Jake's office that could tell me what it was that Jake wanted from Lois. Or maybe there *was* something that could tell me what it was that Jake wanted from Lois, but it was somewhere else. I looked at my watch. Ten thirty-eight. I had the time to go back to my office and write my report on what it was I discovered so far in what it was that Jake wanted from Lois. And should. I didn't know if I'd have a chance to do it at another time.

I was here at my office now. Sitting behind my desk and writing my report on what it was I had discovered so far in what it was that Jake wanted from Lois. Then I turned the printer on and printed out the report and put the report in the folder of the file on the Latham scheme case, and then I turned the computer and the printer off, and then I sat back in my chair and thought about what it was that I had discovered so

far in whatever it was that Jake wanted from Lois.

The conversations that I had had with Transmutual and the other insurance companies and what I had discovered inside Jake's office and his home all told me the same thing: that Jake wanted something from Lois for himself, or someone else wanted something from Lois for himself, and he was having Jake try to get it for him, or he was having Jake try to help him get it for him. That would explain why Jake wasn't doing anything for Transmutual and the other insurance companies that had to do with Lois. It would explain that his trying to get what he wanted from Lois for himself or someone else or help the someone else get it for him was a private matter. And if Jake *were* trying to get this something from Lois for someone else, or help this someone else get what he wanted from Lois, and just because Jake's trying to get this something from Lois for the someone else, or help the

someone else get what he wanted from Lois, was a private matter didn't mean that the someone else was Jake's client. Since Jake was an insurance investigator and not a private investigator. Since Jake's clients were insurance companies and not private citizens. Since Jake only looked into insurance matters and not private matters. Which meant that this was not a business venture for Jake. A friend of his, or the friend of a friend of his, or someone he met, found out about what Lois had and asked Jake to help him get it or get it for him. And in return, the someone else would pay Jake for doing what he wanted. And so Jake had agreed to help him get it or get if for him. Or maybe Jake himself had found out about what Lois had and was going to get it for himself. There was that possibility. And if there were someone else who was having Jake help him get this something from Lois for himself, or have Jake get this something from Lois for him, then I was going to have

to find out who this someone was as well as continue trying to find out what it was that Jake wanted from Lois and continue trying to find out if Jake wanted this something for himself, or if he were helping someone else get the something for him or get it for him. And I was going to have to find a way to do these things without disturbing what Lois was doing. But I could also put Jake under surveillance. Maybe that would help, too. But first I was going to have to call Wilcox and tell him about this new development in the case. He was going to need to know about it. Since he was the client. The Latham scheme case was not over yet. My hand reached for the phone.

CHAPTER X

A few hours later, I was here inside my work room, another room that was in my office. I had called Wilcox at work and had asked him to come over here to my office after work so I could tell him about this new development in the case, and he did, and then I had told him about the new development in the case and what I was going to do and that he should continue doing what he had done before. Then Wilcox left and I had written a summary of everything that Wilcox and I had talked about. Now I was sitting at a desk and watching the receiver to the homing device so I could find out when Jake was going to leave the office and put him under surveillance. I didn't feel like leaving the office and drive around while I watch the receiver to the homing device. It'd be a waste

of time and gas if I would. I'd pick up his trail and run out of gas in the course of my finding and putting him under surveillance.

I also listened to the radios to the bugs I was using in the investigation. But so far nothing was going on at Jake's place or at his office or at his car or at Lois's place or at the property she owned.

I also thought about what it was that Jake or this someone else must want from Lois. It had to be something important. Something that was important to either one of them and not to someone else. Or maybe it was something valuable. It couldn't be the money that Lois was hiding and smuggling out of her property and into her bank. They must not know about it. They may have found out that Lois had been one of the people who had quit Security Items a few days before the first robbery at Security Items had been committed, but that was all. They wouldn't be able to prove she had been one of the people who had committed the

robbery because of this. And because of this, Jake or the someone else may not be interested in the money. But one of them may be interested in the statue of Apollo. Lois had showed it to other people. And the statue was insured. And Jake or the someone else had found out about the statue and decided he wanted it. There was that possibility. Then, I saw the signal on the receiver to the homing device. The arrow was flashing. Quickly I put the receiver and the radios to the bugs I was using in the investigation into my suitcase, and then I left the work room and locked the door. And then I unlocked the door marked PRIVATE that was behind my desk, and walked out of it and closed and locked the door, and then I stepped out of my office and closed and locked the door, and then I walked out into the parking lot and got into my car and put the briefcase on the front seat of my car, and then I opened it up so I could watch the radios and the receiver to the homing

device, and then I started up my car and drove out of the parking lot and turned onto the street and drove down the street and watched the receiver to the homing device. It was time now for me to find and follow Jake.

I found him. And then I followed him. And I saw him go over to Lois's place. Then I saw him stop in front of Lois's place, and then I saw Lois come out of her apartment and close and lock the door to her apartment. She was wearing a short sleeve white blouse and white pants with green flowers and white tennis shoes, and the strap of her purse was resting on her right shoulder.

After she closed and locked the door to her apartment, she walked down the stairs and got into Jake's car, and then she and Jake drove away. I followed them and looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I had seen Jake and Lois do and when I had seen them

do it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and continued watching and following Jake; I also listened to what he and Lois were talking about inside Jake's car. But I didn't hear them talking about whatever it was that Jake or the someone else wanted from Lois. But that didn't mean that Jake wouldn't talk to Lois about it later. There would be the possibility that he would talk to Lois about it later. Right now he was working in his cover on his project. He probably knew that that was important. Right now Jake and Lois were talking about other things.

I saw Jake and Lois go over to Sea Galley. No doubt they were going to have dinner there. Then I saw them go into Sea Galley. Jake was wearing a white corduroy jacket and a red shirt and blue jeans and black cowboy boots. I parked my car across the street from Sea Galley and a few car lengths away from the restaurant and watched the restaurant, then looked at my watch, and

then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when they did it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and continued watching the restaurant.

About two hours later, I saw Jake and Lois walk out of Sea Galley and over to the Sehome Cinema. Then I saw them go into Sehome Cinema. So they were going to see a movie. I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when I saw them do it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and watched the theatre.

About two and a half hours later, I saw Jake and Lois walk out of the theatre and over to Jake's car and get into it and drive away. I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when I saw them do it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket, and then I

started up my car and followed Jake and Lois.

While I followed Jake and Lois, I listened in on what they were talking about inside Jake's car. But so far Jake wasn't talking about what he or the someone else wanted from Lois. But no doubt he'd do that later. Right now, he had to work in his cover. Right now, Jake and Lois were talking about other things.

Then I saw Jake and Lois go over the Five Columns and go into it and looked at my watch and recorded what I saw them do and when they did it. No doubt they were going to get something to eat before Jake takes Lois back to her place.

I parked across the street from the Five Columns and watched the restaurant. The Five Columns was a nice Greek and Italian restaurant. I had eaten there before.

About an hour and a half later, I saw Jake and Lois walk out of the Five Columns and get into Jake's car and drive away. I started

up my car and followed them and looked at my watch and pulled my voice recorder out and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when they did it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and continued following Jake and Lois and listened in on what they were talking about inside Jake's car. But they talked about other things again and not about what Jake or the someone else wanted from Lois.

I saw Jake and Lois go back to Lois's place. Then I saw Jake park his car on the same side of the street that Lois's place was on, and then I saw Jake and Lois go up to Lois's apartment, and then I saw Lois unlock the door to her place, and then I saw her and Jake go into Lois's place and close the door behind them. I parked my car across the street from Lois's place and a few car lengths away from her place and looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when they did it, and then I put my

voice recorder back into my pocket and watched Lois's place; I also listened in on what was going on inside Lois's place. But all I heard was Lois and Jake talking about were other things again and not about what Jake or the someone else wanted from Lois.

Three hours later, I saw Jake walking out of Lois's place and getting into his car and driving away. I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw him do and when I saw him do it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and started up my car and followed Jake.

I saw him go back to his place. Then I parked my car across the street from his place, and a few car lengths away from his place, and then I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw him do and when I saw him do it. Then I watched Jake's place. Then I saw a light inside Jake's place being turned on. I looked at my watch and recorded what I saw and when I saw it. Then I put my voice

recorder back into my pocket and watched Jake's place.

A few minutes later, I saw the same light inside Jake's place being turned off. I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw and when I saw it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and continued watching Jake's place, and then I realized that Jake must have turned in. That would explain why the light inside his place had been turned off. And then I decided that *I'd* better turn in, too. I was getting sleepy. And it looked like I'd have the opportunity to sleep. Since Jake had turned in. And because of this, he must be sleepy right now, too. And since he must be sleepy right now, he wouldn't be going anywhere else right now. He'd stay at home and get some sleep tonight. So I started my car, and then I left Jake's place and went back to *my* place and went to sleep.

The next day, I was here inside the work room of my office again. Listening to all of the radios to the bugs I was using in the investigation, and watching the receiver to the homing device. Then, I heard something at Jake's place. It was Jake's phone. It was ringing. I looked at my watch and listened.

"Hello," he said.

"Hello, a voice said. "Mr. Barlow?"

"Yes?"

"This is Bruce Darby from Acme Medical Supplies?"

"Yes?"

"Your doctor's bag has come in."

"Great. I'll be in today to get it." Then Jake hung up.

So did Bruce.

After that, they hung up. Then I recorded what I had just heard Jake and the medical supply company talk about, and when they had talked about it. Then I turned my voice recorder off and wondered: Jake had ordered a medical bag? Why? Maybe the bag had to

do with what Jake or the someone else wanted from Lois. Or maybe the bag had to do with something else. I was going to have to find out which. I put my voice recorder into my pocket and left the work room, and then I left the office and went back to Jake's place to continue putting him under surveillance.

Along the way, I continued listening in on Jake's place. But I didn't hear him talking to anyone else either inside his place or on the phone.

When I got here to Jake's place, I saw Jake's car. It was still parked outside his apartment. Then I parked *my* car across the street from Jake's apartment and a few car lengths away from Jake's car. Then I watched Jake's place.

A few minutes later, I saw Jake walk out of his place. He was wearing a light blue windbreaker and a white shirt and blue pants and black tennis shoes. Then I saw him get into his car and drive away. I started

up my car and followed him and looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake do and when he did it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and continued watching and following Jake.

Along the way, I didn't see or hear his talking to anyone on his cell phone. I only heard his listening to the car radio.

Then I saw Jake arrive at this medical supply company and go into it. Then I looked at my watch and got out my voice recorder and recorded what I saw Jake do and when he did it. Then I parked my car across the street from the medical supply company, and a few car lengths away from the medical supply company, and watched the store.

A few minutes later, I saw Jake walk out of the medical supply store. He had a bag in his hand. Not the doctor's bag, but a bag you put items into after you buy them. But I realized that maybe the doctor's bag was

inside the other bag. I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake do and when I saw him do it. Then I saw him get into his car and drive away. I looked at my watch and recorded his leaving the medical supply store and when I saw him do it. Then I put my voice recorder away and started up my car and continued following Jake.

I followed Jake back to his place. Then I saw him go into his place and looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake do and when I saw him do it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and parked my car across the street from Jake's place and watched Jake's place.

A few minutes later, I saw Jake come out of his place. He was still wearing the same clothes he had worn before. Then I saw him get into his car and drive away. I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake do

and when he did it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket, and then I looked around to make sure that no one was going to see me sneak into Jake's place. No one did. Then I took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on, and then I got out of my car and locked it and crossed the street and snuck into Jake's place and locked the door behind me. It was time now for me to search Jake's place again. I did. Then I found what I had been looking for: the bag I had seen Jake take with him when I had seen him leave the medical supply company. It was inside the closet inside Jake's study. I took it out of the closet and took it over to Jake's big mahogany desk and put it on Jake's desk, and then I withdrew the contents from the bag: a box. It was already opened. No doubt Jake had opened it when he had brought it back here to his place. He had wanted to take a look at the contents of the box and had. Now I wanted to take a look at the contents of the box. I pulled it

out of the box. Then, I stopped suddenly and looked. The contents of the box was a doctor's bag. It was long and black and big. I took my tape measure and pen and notebook out of my pocket and measured the bag and wrote down the measurements of the bag in my notebook. Then I realized that this bag was big enough to put the statue of Apollo in. Then, I realized something else: what if this were what Jake or the someone else wanted from Lois: the statue of Apollo? There was that possibility.

CHAPTER XI

I was here at my office now. I had put the doctor's bag back inside its box and put the box back where I had found it, and then I had snuck out of Jake's place and left his place and went back to my office so I could think about what I just discovered inside Jake's place. Now I was writing my report on what I seen Jake do today and what I had discovered at his place. Then I printed out the report and put it in the folder of the file on the Latham scheme case, and then I turned off the computer and the printer, and then I sat back in my chair and thought about what it was I had discovered inside Jake's place: the doctor's bag.

It was big enough to put the statue of Apollo in. And the size of the bag and what I had seen Jake do ever since I had seen him do what he's been doing with Lois would

prove that Jake or the someone else wanted the statue for himself. And the bag would be perfect for smuggling the statue out of its hiding place. All Jake or the someone would have to do was take the statue out of its hiding place and put it inside the bag, and then Jake or the someone else would leave with the statue inside the bag, and if someone would see his leaving and carrying the doctor's bag, he would think that that the person who was carrying the doctor's bag was a doctor. But, of course, Jake or the someone else would also put on a disguise to keep someone or more than one person from finding out that Jake or the someone else had stolen the statue.

These two methods would explain how the statue would be smuggled away from its hiding place after it'd be stolen.

But there was still the matter of how the statue would be stolen. Sooner or later, Jake would discover where the statue was hidden. After all, he was a trained investigator. And

once he'd find it, he'd steal for himself or for the someone else or help the someone else steal the statue.

And there was still the matter of when Jake or the someone else would steal the statue. One of them or both of them would have to steal it after one of them or both of them find the statue. Right now one of them or both of them must not have known where the statue was. And finding it would take time. But one of them or both of them will find it and steal it. And I was going to have to keep one of them or both of them from finding it and stealing it. And one of the things I could do to keep one of them or both of them from finding and stealing the statue was put one of them or both of them under surveillance. That would help. And I could put one of them or both of them under surveillance right now. There was no reason not to. So I closed up the lid to my briefcase and grabbed the briefcase and left the office. The radios to the bugs I was using

in the investigation and the receiver to the homing device I was using in the investigation were still inside the briefcase, and I had been listening to the radios and had been watching the receiver to the homing device while I had been written my report on what I had seen Jake do today, and what I had discovered inside Jake's place, and while I had been thinking about what I had discovered inside Jake's place. But at those times, nothing had happened at Lois's place or at her property or at Jake's place or at his office or in his car.

I was driving over to Lois's place and listening to the radios to the bugs I was using in the investigation, and glancing at the receiver to the homing device I was using in the investigation now. I thought it might a good idea to see if Jake were going to go over to Lois's place to find the statue, or maybe he was already there, looking for the statue. Either way, he would want to find the statue before stealing it. He wouldn't

want to look for the statue, then steal it. That would take time.

In other words, he was going to need to case Lois's place.

Another reason why I wanted to go over to Lois's place was to measure that statue. To see if it would have the same measurements as the doctor's bag. If it would, then that would confirm what I suspected: that the size of the doctor's bag and what I had seen Jake doing ever since I had seen what he's been doing with Lois would prove that Jake or the someone else wanted the statue for himself.

Along the way, I heard some activity inside Lois's place. It sounded like someone was moving around inside Lois's place. But that was all he was doing. If Jake were doing all of this moving around, then he must be there at Lois's place and casing it right now.

When I got here to Lois's place, I saw Jake's car. It was parked on the same side of the street that Lois's place was on. I looked

at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded the fact I saw Jake's car here at Lois's place, and when I saw it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and parked my car across the street from Lois's place and watched Lois's place and continued listening to the radios to the bugs I was using in the investigation, and continued watching the receiver to the homing device I was using in the investigation.

About an hour later, I saw Jake stepped out of Lois's apartment and close and lock the door. Then I saw him walk down the stairs and get into his car and drive away. Quickly I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake do and when I saw him do it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and saw Jake drive completely out of my sight. I needed to do that. I didn't want Jake to see what I was going to do. Then I looked around to see if

anyone were going to see I was going to do. No one saw me. Then I took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on, and then I scooped up the briefcase, and then I got out of my car and locked it and snuck into Lois's place to find out if the statue of Apollo were still inside Lois's place, and to measure the statue himself, and to see if anything else of Lois's were still here at her place.

I was inside the locked empty room of Lois's place now. I got into the hiding place of the statue of Apollo to see if the statue were still here. It was. Then I took my tape measure and pen and notebook out of my pocket and measured the statue. The statue had the same measurements as the doctor's bag. So that confirmed my suspicion: that the size of the doctor's bag and what I had seen Jake do ever since I had seen what he's been doing with Lois would prove that Jake or the someone else wanted the statue for himself. I wrote down the measurements of the statue in my notebook. Then I put my

pen and notebook and tape measure back into my pocket and slid the wall back in front of the statue. Then I looked around Lois's place to see if everything here inside Lois's place were still here. It was. Then I snuck out of Lois's place and crossed the street and got to my car and unlocked it and got into it and started it up and left Lois's place. It was time now for me to go back to my office and think.

Along the way, I opened up the lid to my briefcase and continued listening in on the radios to the bugs I was using in my investigation, and continued watching the receiver to the homing device I was using in my investigation. But I didn't hear anything going at Lois's place, and I still didn't hear anything going on at Lois's property, and I still didn't hear anything going on at Jake's place, and I still didn't hear anything going on at Jake's office, and I still didn't hear anything going on inside Jake's car.

CHAPTER XII

I was here at my office now. Sitting behind my desk and still listening to the radios to the bugs I was using in my investigation, and still watching the receiver to the homing device I was using in my investigation. They were still inside my briefcase, and my briefcase was on my desk. I also thought about what I had seen and had heard inside Lois's place: Jake must have cased Lois's place before he steals the statue. That would explain why he had taken the doctor's bag back to his place after he had gone over to the medical supply store and had gotten the bag, and then he must have gone over to Lois's place and cased it, and found the statue, and that would explain the activity I had heard inside Lois's place when I had gone over to Lois's place, and that

would explain my seeing Jake's leaving Lois's place after I had gone over to her place.

So now it looked like Jake had cased the place for the statue and found the statue.

But now there was the matter of when he was going to steal the statue. No doubt he would steal the statue whenever Lois wouldn't be at home. And in order for him to find out when Lois was going to leave her place, he would put her under surveillance. And the moment he sees her leave her place, he sneaks into it and steals the statue. And in order for me to keep Jake from stealing the statue, *I* was going to have to put *Jake* under surveillance. But first I was going to have to find him. But before I find and put Jake under surveillance, I was going to have to get more gas and more food for the search and surveillance. I went behind the door and came back with a thermos, and then I closed the lid on the briefcase and scooped up the briefcase and left the office.

I was driving away from the office now. I had checked the gas gage. It said that the tank was about half empty. Now I was looking around for a gas station so I could get more gas and more food.

I found the gas station and got more gas and more food and coffee for the thermos. Then I left and watched the receiver to the homing device I was using in the investigation, and listened to the radios to the bugs I was using in the investigation, while I drove. Then I noticed the arrow on the receiver of the homing device: it was flashing. I went in the direction of the homing device.

Along the way, I also thought about something: the only activity I had heard was at Lois's place. Those times when I had heard Jake move around inside Lois's place. I hadn't heard or seen any kind of activity at Lois's property or at Jake's office or at Jake's place or in Jake's car. I hadn't even heard any phone conversations at Lois's place or at

Jake's place or at Jake's office or in Jake's car that had to do with what Jake or the someone else wanted from Lois. Which meant that Jake was working alone on getting what he wanted from Lois. No one else was working with him on this; not even the someone else.

In other words, Jake wanted the statue of Apollo for himself.

And it looked like I found Jake. The arrow on the receiver of the homing device was flashing strongly. Then I saw Jake's car parked outside his office. Which meant that Jake must be in his office right now. I parked my car across the street from Jake's office, and a few car lengths away from Jake's car, and watched Jake's office. But this time I was going to stay with Jake. I was going to need to be around to stop from stealing the statue of Apollo. Because of this, I wasn't going to go home and get some sleep whenever I'd have the chance to sleep. And I wasn't going to do anything else while I'd have the chance

to do it until I stop Jake from stealing the statue of Apollo; I also thought about something else: Jake must have come back here to his office after he had gone over to the medical supply store and got the doctor's bag and took it back to his place and went over to Lois's place and cased it for the statue. And the reason why he must have come back here to his office after he had gone to the medical supply office and got the doctor's bag and took it back to his place and went over to Lois's place and cased her place for the statue was because he had to come back here to his office. There was his job and other things he had to take care of until he steals the statue. They needed his attention as well the statue did.

I was getting hungry so I poured me a cup of coffee and pulled a sandwich out of the bag of groceries and sipped the coffee and ate the sandwich while I continued watching Jake's office.

A few hours later, I heard Jake make a phone call on the phone in his office. I looked at my watch and listened to Jake's making the phone call.

"Hello," a female voice said.

"Hello," Jake said. "Lois?"

"Yes?"

"It's Jake,"

"Jake," she said excitedly.

"I'm finished here at the office, so I'm going to go home and change clothes, and then I'll pick you up for our date tonight."

"I'll be waiting for you,"

"Great," Then Jake hung up.

So did Lois.

I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I had heard Jake and Lois talk about on the phone and when I heard it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and thought: so Jake and Lois were going to go out again tonight. I watched Jake's office.

Then I saw him come out of his office and get into his car and start it up and leave. I looked at my watch and started up *my* car and followed Jake. Then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake do and when I saw him do it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket.

I followed Jake back to his place. Then I saw him go into his place. Then I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake do and when I saw him do it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and parked my car across the street from Jake's place, and a few car lengths away from Jake's place, and watched Jake's place.

A few minutes later, I saw Jake walk out of his place. I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw him do and when I saw him do it. Then I put my voice recorder back

into my pocket and watched what Jake was doing.

He was wearing a brown suit, a yellow shirt, no tie, open collar, and black leather shoes.

But he didn't have the doctor's bag with him. Instead, he had nothing with him. Then I saw Jake get into his car and start it up and drive away from his place. I looked at my watch and started up *my* car and followed Jake. Then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake do and when I saw him do it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and watched what Jake was doing while I followed him. I also thought about the doctor's bag: he didn't have it with him. Which meant that he wasn't going to steal the statue tonight. Instead, he was going to steal it at another time. But just the same, I was going to stick to him until I keep him from stealing the statue.

I saw him arrive here at Lois's place. I also saw Lois. She was standing outside her place. She was wearing white tank tops and white pants with violet flowers and white tennis shoes, and her right hand was grasping the strap of her purse, which was resting on her right shoulder.

Then I saw Lois walk down the stairs from her place and get into Jake's car, and then I saw Jake and Lois pull away from Lois's place and drive down the street. I followed them. I also looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when I saw them do it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and continued watching and following Jake and Lois.

I saw Jake and Lois go to Akroteri and have dinner there. I parked my car across the street from Akroteri and watched the restaurant and looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and

recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when I saw them do it. Then I put my voice recorder back into pocket and continued watching the restaurant.

Akroteri was a wonderful Greek restaurant here in downtown Bellingham. I had eaten here before. Akroteri was one of my favorite places to eat at.

It was getting dark out now. Dark was replacing the light.

About two and a half hours later, I saw Jake and Lois walk out of Akroteri and get into Jake's car and leave the restaurant. I looked at my watch and started up *my* car and followed them. Then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when I saw them do it. Then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and continued watching and following Jake and Lois.

It was dark out now. Dark had replaced the light.

I followed Jake and Lois here to Sunset Square. Then I saw them pull into the parking lot and Jake parked his car there, and then he and Lois got out of the car and Jake locked it, and then he and Lois went into the Sunset Cinema. I looked at my watch and saw what they did and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw them do and when they did it, and then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and drove into the parking lot and parked my car here and watched the Sunset Cinema. So it looked like Jake and Lois were going to see a movie tonight.

About two hours later, I saw Jake and Lois walk out of the theatre and go somewhere here inside Sunset Square. Although I didn't see where it was they went to. That view was blocked by another building on the other side of the Sunset Cinema. Which meant that maybe there were going to go over to El Gatano and get something to eat. There was that possibility.

El Gatano was right across from the Sunset Cinema. Within walking distance from the theatre.

El Gatano was a wonderful Mexican restaurant here in Sunset Square. I had eaten there before. It was one of my favorite places to eat at.

I looked at my watch and got out my voice recorder and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when I saw them do it, and then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and continued watching the place that Jake and Lois must be at right now.

About an hour and a half later, I saw Jake and Lois appear and go into the parking lot and get into Jake's car and leave Sunset Square. I looked at my watch and started up *my* car and followed them. Then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when I saw them do it, and then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and

continued watching and following Jake and Lois.

I saw them go back to Lois's place, and then I saw Jake stop his car in front of Lois's place, and then I saw Lois get out of Jake's car and go up to her apartment and unlock the door and go into her place, and I also saw Jake watch Lois up to and into her place, and then I saw Jake leave. I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake and Lois do and when I saw them do it, and then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and parked my car across the street from Lois's place and watched Lois's place. It was time now for me to stay here at Lois's place and watch Lois's place and wait for Jake to show up so I can stop him from stealing the statue of Apollo. I would have followed Jake to continue putting him under surveillance before I stop him from stealing the statue, but that may not help. He might spot me, although he hadn't so far, or I might lose

him without his knowing I was following him. Because of these two theories, I thought it best to stay here at Lois's place and watch Lois's place and wait for Jake to show up so I can stop him from the stealing the statue.

CHAPTER XIII

The next morning, dawn appeared. I had continued staying here at Lois's place and watching it and waiting for Jake to show up so I can stop him from stealing the statue all night last night and into this morning, but nothing out of the ordinary had happened at Lois's place. Which meant that Lois was still at her place. And Jake hadn't showed up at that time to steal the statue. But that didn't mean he wouldn't. If he still wanted to steal the statue, he'll show up. Now I saw the dark being replaced by the light and poured more coffee into the cup from my thermos and sipped the coffee, and then I pulled another sandwich and out of the bag of groceries and ate it and continued watching Lois's place and continued watching for Jake. Then, I saw Jake. He pulled up to the curb out in front of Lois's place and parked his car on

the same side of the street Lois's place was on and a few car lengths away from Lois's place and watched Lois's place. Quickly I took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on. It was time now for me to stop Jake from stealing the statue. I had come up with a way to stop Jake from stealing the statue without disturbing what Lois was doing. And hopefully it'll work. And my wearing the gloves was one of the things I was going to do to stop Jake from stealing the statue. Then I looked at my watch and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I saw Jake do and when I saw him do it, and then I put my voice recorder back into my pocket and continued watching Jake and Lois's place and continued eating my sandwich and sipping my coffee.

Then, about three hours later, I saw Lois step out of her place and locked the door.

She was wearing a white dress and flesh tone stockings and white high heel shoes,

and the strap of her purse was resting on her right shoulder.

Then she put her keys into her purse and walked down to her car and got into it, and then she started it up and drove away. She must be going to work now. Then I looked at Jake to see what *he* was doing. He looked around. Probably to see if anyone were going to see what he was going to do. Then he got out of his car and closed the door.

He was wearing a gray tweed coat and a white shirt and black leather gloves and black pants and black leather shoes, and in one of his hands was the doctor's bag. Then he went up to Lois's apartment. Quickly *I* looked around to see if anyone were going to see what *I* was going to do. No one did. Then I watched Jake and saw him go into Lois's place and close the door behind him. No doubt he used a lock pick set to pick the lock of the front door of Lois's place so he can inside it. Then I got out of my car and crossed the street and went up to Lois's

place and stopped at the front door and put my ear to the door to hear what was going on inside Lois's place. Then I heard walking in the living room. Then I opened the door quickly and silently and just enough to peek inside. I didn't see Jake inside the living room. Which meant that he must be in the hall right now. Quickly I took my bandana out of my pocket and put it over my nose and mouth and tied the ends of the bandana behind my neck, and then I took my lock pick set out of my pocket and quickly and silently picked the lock of the front door of Lois's place, and then I stepped into Lois's place as quickly and silently as I could and put my lock pick set back into my pocket and looked towards the hall. Then I took my knock out drops out of my pocket, and then, I tip toed over to the hall and got up against the wall and looked inside the hall. Then I saw Jake unlocking the door to the empty room. And he was using the same kind of lock pick I used when I had unlocked the

door to the room and had gotten into it: the electronic device. He must have gotten the idea of using this kind of lock pick from me. He had seen me use it once before in a case we had worked on before. I hadn't seen or heard of his using this kind of lock pick before in another case. Then, as quickly and silently as I could, I rushed into the hall and put the knock out drops underneath the nostrils of Jake's nose--and then it happened: Jake passed out and dropped to the floor, and the electronic device and the doctor's bag dropped to the floor. Then I picked up the electronic device and continued unlocking the door to the empty room to go inside the room and see if the statue were still inside its hiding place. It was. Then I slid the wall back into place, and then I left the room and closed and locked the door the same way I had unlocked the door. Then I put the electronic device into my pocket. I didn't want the police to find it on Jake when they search him. Jake would tell the

police that he had gotten the idea of using this kind of lock pick from me when they come here and notice he's here. I didn't want this to happen. I didn't want anything on Jake that would tell him or the police or both that I had been here at Lois's place and had stopped Jake from stealing the statue. Then I dragged Jake back into the living room and put him close to the front door of Lois's place and then I looked inside his pocket for *his* lock pick set and found it, and then I put one of the lock picks inside one of his hands, and put the rest of his lock pick set back into his pocket, and then I went back into the hall and got the doctor's bag and went back to Jake and put the handle of the doctor's bag inside Jake's other hand, and then I removed the bug and phone tap I had put here inside Lois's place and put them into my pockets. I don't think the police would find them, but, just in case. And I didn't want them to find the bug and the phone tap. I didn't want anything here to show that

I had been here. Then I peeked out the door. The coast was clear. No one was watching the house. Then I took my bandana off and put it back into my pocket, and then I stepped out of Lois's place and closed the door. But I didn't lock it. I thought it might be a good idea not to lock the door. Then I walked down the stairs and crossed the street and got into my car and started it up and drove away from Lois's place so I could go find a pay phone and call the police and tell them anonymously that I had seen someone break into Lois's place. I didn't want to make the call from my cell phone. The number would be traced.

I found the pay phone and went over to it, and then I turned to the side so no one would see what I was going to do, and then I called the police and spoke into my voice changer so I could disguise my voice and told the police anonymously that I had seen someone break into Lois's place. Then I gave the police Lois's address, and then I hung up

and put my voice changer back into my pocket and got back into my car and started it up and drove back to Lois's place so I could see the police show up and arrest Jake.

When I got here to Lois's place, I parked my car on the other side of the street from Lois's place, and a few yards away from Lois's place, and then I took my binoculars out of my glove compartment and looked through them to see what was going on at Lois's place. The police hadn't showed up. But that didn't meant they wouldn't. I had probably gotten here before they did.

Then I saw the police show up and go up to Lois's place and knock on her door. No answer. Then they knocked on the door again. But again, there was no answer. Then the police knocked on the door again a few more times. But again, there was no answer. Then one of them turned the knob of the door to go into Lois's place and noticed the knob of the door hadn't been locked. Both policemen went into Lois's place.

A few minutes later, I saw both policemen take Jake out of Lois's place and put him in their car. He had handcuffs on. They must have brought him to and noticed what he had tried to do and read him rights. Then I saw more police cars show up. No doubt the police people inside those cars were going to investigate the scene of the crime. Then I left. I had done what I had come here to Lois's place to do. It was time now for me to go home and rest up. I was going to need to do that. It had been a long night and a long morning and a close call when I had stopped Jake from stealing the statue.

CHAPTER XIV

The next morning, I was up early and at my place and sitting in the living room and watching TV and sipping coffee. The night before I had gotten a good night's sleep. Now I was watching the news. It told me that yesterday someone had broken into Lois's place and had tried to steal something. But he didn't get whatever it was that he had tried to steal. And the police had searched Lois's place and discovered that nothing had been stolen.

The person who had tried to steal whatever it was that he had tried to steal was freelance insurance investigator Jake Barlow. He lived here in Bellingham, and he had own office on State Street. The police had interrogated him to find out what it was that he had tried to steal, but he hadn't told him.

He had clammed up and had requested a lawyer.

And Lois herself was pleased to hear that nothing had been stolen from his place, but she was surprised to hear that Jake had tried to steal something from her place. They had been going out.

Then the news announcer talked about something else.

I was pleased, too. My plan to keep Jake from stealing the statue without disturbing what Lois was doing had worked. Then I got out of my recliner chair and walked over to the phone and called Wilcox at work and told him I'd like to meet him somewhere and talk to him. Then we decided on where and when to have the meeting, and then we hung up. After that, I went back to my chair and sat back down in it and continued watching TV and sipping my coffee; I also thought about Jake. It was very disappointing finding out that he had gone bad. I had liked him. Of course I wouldn't be

telling Wilcox about the money Lois stole, which was really hers, because that was her secret.

A few hours later, Wilcox and I were here at my office. We had agreed to meet here at my office after Wilcox gets off work. Now I told him that I had kept Jake from stealing the statue of Apollo the way I had planned, and this morning, I had heard on TV the news of the results of how I had stopped Jake from stealing the statue.

"So the case is closed now, huh?" Wilcox asked me after I had finished.

"Yes, it is," I said. "Now you know that Lois Latham is up to something, and it's legal, but she's doing this something legal in a secret fashion, and we'll have to keep her secret. By doing that, we don't tell anyone what she's doing; we don't even tell Lois Latham herself that we're keeping her secret. And *you* will have to continue doing what you've done before when I was looking into Lois Latham's being up to something,

although, this time, you won't have to keep your eyes and ear open. And Jake Barlow is in jail for trying to steal the statue of Apollo, and Lois Latham is pleased that he didn't steal it, although she was surprised when she found out that he tried to steal it. They had been going out."

"Yeah," Wilcox said, smiling and nodding.

"Yeah," I said, smiling and nodding, too. "And everything that we're talking about that has to do Lois Latham's being up to something ends right here in this office. When we leave here, we don't tell anyone--not even Lois Latham--what we've talked about."

"I understand. You did a good job, Mr. Hurley."

"Thank you,"

"You're welcome. And you send me your invoice, and I'll send you your check."

"I'll do that, and I'll watch for your check. Anything else, Mr. Wilcox?"

"No. I think that's it."

Then Wilcox and I stood up and shook hands.

Wilcox was wearing a light green suit and a white shirt and a red tie with yellow diamonds and black leather shoes.

Then Wilcox left. And I turned around and unlocked the filing cabinet and took the file on the Latham scheme case out of the cabinet and put it on the desk. Then I sat down behind my desk and turned the computer on and wrote a summary on everything that Wilcox and I had just talked about. I was going to need to do that.

After I wrote the summary, I turned on the printer and printed out the summary and put the summary into the folder of the file on the Latham scheme case. Then I turned the computer and the printer off. Then I put my briefcase on my desk, and then I opened it up and put the file on the Latham scheme case into the briefcase, and then I closed up the briefcase, and then I

collected the briefcase and stepped out of my office and closed and locked the door, and then I walked out into the parking lot and got into my car and started it up and left my office. It was time now for me to go somewhere private or secret and burn the file on the Latham scheme case and stir the ashes around. This would be another way to help Wilcox and me keep Lois's secret. Although I hadn't told Wilcox that I had created the file on the Latham scheme case. The less I had told him about the case, the better. It had been for the sake of keeping Lois's secret.

And after the file is destroyed, the case will really be closed.

I was here inside a wooded area now. I had found and collected wood and made a fire. Now I was tossed into the fire each and every paper and photograph and the folder of the file on the Latham scheme case and watched each and every paper and photograph and the folder of the file be

consumed by the fire that was getting bigger and bigger with each passing second.

Now each and every paper and photograph and the folder of the file were ashes. Then I stirred the ashes around with a stick.

Now the file was destroyed. And now the destruction of the file was another way that was helping Wilcox and me keep Lois's secret. And now the case was really closed.